

IS THERE ROOM FOR MIGRANTS?  
REPRESENTATIONS OF ST. PETERSBURG IN LOCAL NEWSPAPERS



ITÄ-SUOMEN YLIOPISTO

Laura Mäki 165224  
University of Eastern Finland  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Business Studies  
Department of Geographical and Historical Studies  
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## **Research statement**

Uneven economic development in the post-Soviet countries has resulted in proliferation of labour migration from economically less developed regions of Central Asia and Transcaucasia toward big Russian cities, where salaries are better and urban regeneration combined with demographic decline creates a demand for workforce. Increasing presence of labour migrants since the late 90s has changed the population structure in the cities and led to reconsiderations of not only economic but also ethnic difference, categories of 'us' and 'them', and who is welcome to the city. Tensions within the society, violence and clashes between different social groups are increasingly being defined in ethnic terms, and public and media discourses further contribute to the understanding of migrants as racialised, ethnic others.

In this thesis I look at media representations and conceptions of St. Petersburg in the light of changing form of diversity and socio-ethnic exclusion of labour migrants. How do the social and ethnic margins fit to, and create the spatial margins of the mental maps that guide the everyday life of city dwellers, and how does the image and identity of the city affect the very way in which diversity is perceived? Marginality, its form and location is not seen as a predetermined phenomenon, but is understood as social construction that derives from understanding of difference (in ethnic, social or other terms) either as a constructive and positive, or foreign, threatening and negative part of locality.

On one hand, global and regional economies and the city's position within national and international political and administrative systems all localize in the city and become negotiated, resisted or absorbed, in each case transforming the material and social conditions of the city in a unique way. On the other hand, city as a physical space is a container, the character of which is created in interaction with what it contains. How residents understand the city, how they recognize it as their own, depends on their image of the container: the stories told about it and its past, its position in regional, national, international or global systems, as well as mental maps of everyday life with its margins and centres, inhabited by 'us' and 'them'.

Against this background I study St. Petersburg. On one hand, it has gained a reputation as a city hostile to difference and others, as a city where migrants and ethnic others face discrimination in their everyday life. On the other hand, narratives about multicultural and cosmopolitan Petersburg that gained its character and particularity from diversity, and Soviet Leningrad that embraced brotherhood of nations as an antithesis for fascism, are being told. The city images employed in the talk about migrants, and the everyday practice of social and spatial exclusion of migrants seem to contradict in the newspaper representations of locality.

By analysing texts that articulate images and identities of St. Petersburg in relation to the labour migrants, I trace how the image of multicultural, 'tolerant' city is formed and what is its relation to marginality. By looking at the representations of everyday life, I try to grasp the logic of spatial realisation of 'otherness', margins and difference, the way the city is appropriated for different actors and how the actors' relation to the city is conceptualised. In the end, I try to understand why, despite the emerging articulation of multicultural history of the city, the labour migrants are pushed to the margins of the city life.

Author: Laura Mäki

Student number: 165224

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# 1. Introduction

There is a section titled “St. Petersburg, an open city<sup>1</sup>” at the official website of the St. Petersburg’s<sup>2</sup> city administration (Komitet po investitsiiam 2011). St. Petersburg is described as a European city and global centre of culture and art, the flourishing business potential of which is emphasized together with the great beauty of the city and its UNESCO heritage sites that date back to the times when Petersburg was the capital of Russian Empire. Imperial image of a multicultural city has been further promoted by the city administration and mass media when branding the city for foreign investors (Hellberg-Hirn 2003) and creating a tolerant image of the city for local audiences (Gdaniec 2010; Malakhov & Osipov 2006). At the same time the city administration publishes a manual welcoming labour migrants to the Northern Capital of Russia (Vzgliad v Buduchsheie 2011). Again, St. Petersburg is represented as a major European city with a unique history and culture. However, the “open city” has changed its character: In addition to offering advice for coping with the Russian bureaucracy, the migrants, illustrated as human-faced tools and cleaning equipment, are reminded that they are about to arrive in the Cultural Capital of Russia, where certain etiquette is to be followed. The atmosphere of the city should not be disturbed with loud talk, sitting on one’s heels at the streets, or dressing in a national dress or sportswear on everyday basis.

The city, described as open and cosmopolitan for foreign investors and tourist, and distinguished with a high cultural atmosphere for the migrants, has also been nicknamed notoriously the Capital of Russian Fascism (Piirainen 2002; Boltovskaia 2010, 105). This special reputation is gained with fashioning extreme nationalistic ideologies among some of the new circles of ‘intelligentsia’ (Piirainen 2002), but the prejudice toward minorities is observable also in the wider spectrum of society. Violent attacks targeting non-Slavic population have increased, and tensions in the society break out as riots and mass fights (Hutchingson and Tolz 2012; Mikhailova 2011). These outbreaks of violence are articulated as inter-ethnic conflicts in public and media discourse, that names ethnic minorities, migrants and extremist groups as the major source of instability in Russian society (Shnirelman 2009; Verkhovsky 2009; Hutchingson and Tolz 2012).

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<sup>1</sup> The website is available in Russian and English

<sup>2</sup> St. Petersburg is the second largest city in Russia with a population of 5,1 million (Federal’naia sluzhba gosudarstvennoy statistiki 2014). Located in northwest Russia, the city is closely connected to European trade routes. St. Petersburg is an urban federal subject, and an autonomous administrative unit, having relative financial independence from the federal centre. The city consists of 18 administrative units (*rayony*), and serves as an administrative centre for Northwest Federal District and Leningrad Oblast (e.g. Trumbull 2011).

While the branded image of St. Petersburg celebrates the global potential of the Cultural Capital, the same Cultural Capital seems to be excluding and even hostile to labour migrants and ethnic others who are pushed to the margins of this urban culture. Currently Russia has the world's second largest number of labour migrants (Amirkhanian, Kuznetsova, Kelly et al. 2010). The demand for cheap low-skilled workforce has been growing especially in big Russian cities since the late 1990s (Korobkov 2007) as demographic decline is combined with the country's sizeable labour market (Ryazantsev & Korneev 2014). Alone in 2012, the Federal Migration Service in St. Petersburg issued over 260 000 working permits for foreign citizens, coming mostly from Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (UFMS Rossii... 2013). Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Moldova are also important sources of migrant labour (Brednikova and Tkach 2008, 72). In addition to officially registered migrants, many live and work in the city without legal documents or contracts (Ivakhniuk 2009). Increasing movement of people poses challenges to Russian institutional capacity to manage migration (Ryazantsev & Korneev 2014), changes structure of labour market and raises questions about social and ethnic relations in the society (Gdaniec 2010).

Difference in terms of social and economic status, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation and so forth can be understood as a vital element for making the most or the worst of city. If the way in which a city sees its relation to diversity is central for how minorities and migrants are received, how is it that Petersburg has an identity of a cosmopolitan city and a discriminative reality?

## **1.1 Stating the research question**

*“Journalism, that is, constructs a world and places the reader within an imaginative space.”*

(Gasher 2009, i)

Media play an important role in in appropriation and creation of social reality (Stöber 2006). A lot of research has been done about media discourse on migrants, minorities, racism and multiculturalism, and many researchers agree that newspapers and media in general have had a remarkable role in reinforcing negative attitudes toward migrants, and spreading xenophobia globally and within Russian society (Mukomel' 2005; Gdaniec 2010; 6; Karpenko 2004; Laruelle 2009; Hutchings and Tolz 2012; Morley 2000). The research on media discourse on migrants has produced a lot of information about construction of migrants as ethnic others in the press and thus



contributed to understanding how “crisis of multiculturalism” has been textually produced in media (ibid.; Allan 1994; Pietikäinen 2005; Raittila 2005).

Representations of space and locality are also an important part of understanding how migrants are received, and how urban space and collective identities are negotiated in relation to social others, multiculturalism and diversity (see Finney and Robinson 2008; Miller 2005; Morley 2000). Spatial turn in media studies has brought along discussions about print media’s role in creation of imagined communities and spaces (Anderson 2007) as well as global media’s ability to alter pre-existing understanding of spatial order, regions, communities and borders (Jansson and Falkheimer 2006; Paasi 2003). Nevertheless, geographers’ contributions on how media constructs spatial imaginary and images of location have been relatively few (Burgess and Gold 1985), and the studies discussing spatial imaginary of ethnic otherness often focus on national scale or identity rather than audiences’ local levels of primary identification and belonging (Morley 2000; Stöber 2006; see also Paasi 2001<sup>3</sup>; Finney and Robinson 2008).

In my research I will have a closer look at the processes and characters of the social reality that is created in print media’s writing about labour migrants in St. Petersburg, and thus combine what media studies tell about the discourse of migrants with what geography can say about construction of space and consequent space-specific social realities. Unlike in numerous previous studies (ibid.), I do not assume the preference of articulating national narratives in news about migrants, but rather focus on the ways in which locality is constructed in the talk about others, descriptions and processes of prospective spatialisation of otherness or inclusive notion of locality.

The purpose of this study is to approach the processes of spatialisation of otherness and prospects for inclusive notion of locality from the perspective of mediated local identity and space. *In the light of the recent influx of labour migrants, how do the local print media construct St. Petersburg for its different social groups?* The significance of local identity in the media context of otherness is explicitly studied by asking *how the existing narratives of local identity on one hand, and discourse on migrants on the other, are employed in constructing St. Petersburg as a tolerant and inclusive, or exclusive and marginalizing city?* Finally, *how is the image of the city and the relations between the city and its residents described and legitimised?* The starting point of the analysis is not in interethnic relations, but in relations between actors and space, and the roles given to the actors – locals, migrants, city planners, businesses, administration, or the city itself – in the

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<sup>3</sup> Even though Paasi (2001) writes about construction of regional identities, he relies on the notion that “growing flows of refugees and immigrants calls into question the state-centred identities and narratives of nationally bounded cultures (Paasi 2001, 7).

specific contexts of the news. Representations of St. Petersburg vary according to the context of news, and reveal how the locality is understood in relation to the newcomers.

For the study I chose two local newspapers, *Komsomol'skaia Pravda in St. Petersburg* (hereafter *Komsomol'skaia Pravda* or *KP*) and *Sankt Peterburgskie Vedomosti* (hereafter *Vedomosti*), and analysed their discussion about migrant workers between 2010 and 2011. The qualitative approach of the study locates itself into the tradition of social constructionism and understands language with its signification systems as constitutive for social reality (Jokinen 1999, 40). The analysis is carried out in a framework that combines principles of discourse analysis (language use conceived as social practice) and semiotics<sup>4</sup> as a methodological apparatus. Discourse is understood in a functionalist sense as use of language reflecting, constructing and reproducing social reality (Richardson 2007, 23-26), whereas semiotics, a study of representations, refers to understanding the social reality as a system of signs and their representations (Gottdiener 2005, 4). According to Burgess (1985, 192), media constructs preferred readings, which give meanings to events and social reality through selection, reproduction and interpretation of news. This study is concerned about the textual content of newspaper articles. Pictures, how the articles are located in the paper, or questions related to media channels or media consumption and readers' perceptions are not within the scope of this study.

The case study reveals that simultaneous employment of discourses on racialised migrants and multicultural, tolerant St. Petersburg form a background for creating marginalizing rather than potentially tolerant and inclusive image of locality. Local narratives enforce and establish racialization of migrant-inhabited margins and discursive purification and homogenisation of public urban space in the newspapers' spatial imaginary. Newspapers do not legitimise the created images of St. Petersburg with direct observations from the everyday life, but rather rely on existing stereotypes and established narratives about migrants and locality. Instead of representations of common space and diverse locality, they construct two myths of St. Petersburg, of which the first, myth of Tolerant Petersburg, consisting of discourses of St. Petersburg's identity, aims to establish tolerance as an eternal quality for the historically multicultural city. The second, myth of Migrants' Petersburg, created out of stereotypes about migrants and negative images of places that migrants inhabit, naturalises externalisation of threatening difference into marginal spaces<sup>5</sup> associated with migrants and negative connotations (concept of myth in Barthes 1989;

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<sup>4</sup> The debate on relations between semiotics and semiology is not within the scope of this study. I use the term semiotics also for those linguistic processes that are elsewhere referred to as semiology (e.g. Barthes (1989) about myths).

<sup>5</sup> Representation of space tend to reduce differences to induced ones, which fit within an established system of difference (Lefebvre 1991, 396)

Tarasti 1990; production of place as a myth in Burgess 1985). Instead of paving way to a more inclusive idea of locality, the employment of narratives that construct multicultural identity for St. Petersburg offer only one possible version of accepted local identity for its residents, and thus enforce marginalisation of migrants as an option for complete assimilation.

## **1.2 Concepts for construction of locality and its borders in print media**

Local media is the lens through which the case study is carried out. Firstly, media has to imagine a community in order to gain commercial viability in market-based media system (Finney and Robinson 2008). For local media this creates a need to construct a cohesive place-based community of readers (*ibid.*). Secondly, the media's proximity to politics and restrictions in journalistic freedom require media to promote political interests, and balance the official messages with the interests of readers (Hutchings and Tolz 2012). While most of the academics are rather critical on the manner in which Russian media has managed to articulate pluralistic opinion, the official opinion in the Russian journalistic circles highlight especially the regional media's ability to facilitate discussion and freely articulate interests of different social groups (Korkonoshenko 2001)<sup>6</sup>.

Media texts are not only describing the locations, but actively participate in creation of space for the local, media-consuming people (see for instance see for instance Salovaara-Moring 2006; Finney & Robinson 2008; Gasher 2009). I share Anssi Paasi's understanding of newspapers as "creators of time and space-specific social reality" (1986, 24), and furthermore, in agreement with Burgess (1985), treat media as having a crucial role in the appropriation and interpretation of that reality. Furthermore, local media actively work in creation of local identity through their construction of place, and representation of imagined community it claims to be part of (Finney and Robinson 2008, 399). Press shapes conceptions of physical, economic, political and social environments, and defines who belongs to the community, and thus participates in production and transformation of ideologies (Burgess 1985, 194; Allan 1999, 172; Finney and Robinson 2008).

The study is constructed around media discourse on migrants and other representations of guest workers that become contextualized in the produced images of locality. In addition to descriptions of spatial imaginary, the focus is also on the processes that legitimate represented spatial order, and the resulted position of migrants and locals in the city. In my reading, newspapers contextualise the city on two levels: Firstly, places of news are accounts about specific

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<sup>6</sup> In my thesis the political standing of newspapers is not in a central position, but it could be noted that voices critical to the local politics were frequently heard in the research material.

locations in the perceived city (Lefebvre 1991) where people interact in their daily lives and where marginality of actors is positioned within the normative mental maps. Secondly, news construct St. Petersburg as a symbolic place<sup>7</sup>, an entity in regional system and social consciousness of the particular society (see Paasi 2001a, 16), which is mainly a context for discussing social issues related to migrants and inter-ethnic encounters in the city. In both cases the construction of place is determined by stereotypes about the actors (marginalised migrants or images of locals) and existing narratives on the city (identity of the city). Definitions of locals and migrants is represented in the news, social space as the setting and actual object of analysis and identity of city and local identity that characterise the relationship between space and people are central for setting the frames for the study.

Migrants and locals are the most important social groups in the analysed newspaper articles. The groups are not mutually exclusive (as will be indicated in the analysis, also migrants can be represented as locals in certain contexts), but function as analytical categories for analysing spatial imaginary and inclusion and exclusion in the urban sphere.

I do not employ formal definitions of migrant or migration, but refer to existing studies about media discourse on migrants. Discursive category of migrants, as will be discussed in the chapter 2, does not correspond to the real status of individuals or groups who might or might not have migrated, but simply reflects the idea of migrant in the imagination of the journalist and readers. As Mikhailova (2011, 527) writes, in the media and public use of language the Russian word migrant has lost its original meaning that refers to any people changing their region of residence, and became to signify people who or whose parents moved from Caucasus or Central Asia to what is perceived as traditional homeland for ethnic Russians. Public discourse has racialised migration, constructing Caucasians and non-Russian migrants as the others against whom Russian identity is defined (Hutchings and Tolz 2012; Mukomel' 2005). In addition to biological definition of ethnicity, a more recent version of cultural racism that naturalizes cultural differences as a basis for determining groups' position in society is prevalent in the discourse together with construction of migrants as social others (Karpenko 2014; Shnirelman 2009). In my study I will further elaborate the role of migrant discourse in reinforcing local rather than national identity.

Locals are understood to be the audience of newspapers. Media constructs an idea of locality within its mediated public sphere, which then functions as a symbolic home for those who

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<sup>7</sup> Symbolic place is a concept I modified of Paasi's (2001a) conceptualisation of region through territorial, symbolic and institutional shaping. For the concept of symbolic place only the processes of territorial (borders of place are respective for borders of local/city identity) and symbolic shaping (the signification systems particular for the place – e.g. 'national' landscape, in Petersburg's case the city centre) are relevant. St. Petersburg, as it is referred to in the newspapers, is a symbolic place in a sense that it represents and implies particular features of the locality, against and within which the news and analysis are constructed.

are included in the notion of locality or nation (Finney and Robinson 2008; about national media and national communities Morley 2000, 105). In the newspaper articles, 'local' becomes the norm that is defined in relation to the migrants through representation of locals' natural and privileged right to the city through cultural understanding and belonging to the place<sup>8</sup>. Furthermore, the concept of local is informed by existing research on St. Petersburg and particularity of its residents: 'Petersburgers' and 'Leningraders' as specific types of locals are characterized by qualities that gain their meanings in specific contexts of media text, but rather than being constructed situationally, reflect rather established ways to talk about St. Petersburg and its residents. They are borrowed from the catalogue of St. Petersburg as imperial capital or from the historical narratives dating back to the Soviet Leningrad (Hellberg-Hirn 2003; Rabzhaeva and Semenov 2003). While employed mainly as representations of stereotypic embodiments of either cultural-humanitarian spirit of imperial St. Petersburg or Leningrad's ideas on brotherhood of nations (see *ibid.* and the analysis), they also emphasise the city's impact on the very people it creates and assumes strong local identities that are simultaneously rooted in history and valid today<sup>9</sup>.

Identity is an individual, social and spatial category, which is based on social classifications such as gender, nation, or territory, and is thus founded in individuals, objects, and in the culture where they belong (Smith 1991; Relph 1976). In this study identity is understood as gaining its significance relation to others and thus being always accompanied by borders, social constructions between in indicating difference between 'us and them' (Paasi 2001; Morley and Robins 1995, 45-46). For the context, territorially defined and culturally shared identities are the most interesting.

For analytical purposes, it is useful to make a conceptual difference between identity of territory and local identity (see Paasi 2001a; 2001b). Identity of a territory can be represented rather independently from the residents' idea of their city (Paasi 2001a; 2001b; 2003). Paasi conceptualises identity of territory as a set of narratives about the region (Paasi 2001a; 2001b; Paasi 2003, 477) whereas Relph (1976) attributes physical setting, activities and meanings of the places as components that construct the identity of place. In this study the narratives are understood as stories told about the city where infrastructure, intentions, meanings and activities are entwined and thus represented not only as narratives about the territory, but narratives about a place that gains its significance in interaction with its inhabitants. Media has been criticised for its tendency to produce

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<sup>8</sup> This view is closely connected to geographical understanding of ethnicity, where a certain group legitimates its status by claiming right to 'their' territories. This can be both biological (environmental determinism, unity of certain groups with their territories), and cultural claim (e.g. religious unity of people and place) (Anderson 2010, 39).

<sup>9</sup> Locality defined as the audience of the newspapers should not be equalled with the different form of locality represented in the papers: news represent competing forms of locality, some of which are more accepted and desired than others.

stereotypic images of places that are empty from meaning and leave no room for locals' belonging (Burgess and Gold 1984; Replh 1976). In the context of St. Petersburg, a rather established and wide set of local narratives is available due to city's literary tradition, the greatness of which "leads to the creation of heavily bordered and often even securitised identity [of the city]" (Joenniemi and Morozov 2007, 394)<sup>10</sup>.

In turn, local identity refers to regional consciousness of the local community (in this case understood as community of readers) and is thus related to various degrees of belonging to place (Paasi 2001a; 2001b; 2003). This consciousness may refer to emotional and experiential traces that tie individuals and communities into certain places. It also relates to 'sense of place', feeling of attachment to locale – built natural and social environment that is generated by cultural relations (Anderson 2010, 39). In this study I define the city identity as being the image of St. Petersburg and its citizens, created and reproduced in the talk about migrants by employing the available narratives, whereas local identity is what is called into question when people are asked to relate to the represented image of the city.

### **1.3. Plan of the study**

The study is organised in four following sections: Chapter two introduces the background for setting the scene for grasping what is the current situation concerning migrant workers in Russia and St. Petersburg. An overview on migration and migration policies (2.1, 2.2) set presence of labour migrants Russia into a wider context of demographics and institutional development in Post-Soviet space. How these developments localise in St. Petersburg and everyday reality of migrant workers is also briefly touched upon (2.3) before turning to discussion about interethnic tensions, ideas of multicultural empire and Russian nation (2.4). Multi-cultural history of St. Petersburg (chapter 2.5) is given special attention in order to trace the role of historical and cultural continuum in today's language about migrants and consequent considerations of diversity. The chapter two ends with discussion about previous studies on media discourses on migrants and multiculturalism (2.6). These discourses are understood as relatively established ways on using language (ontological discourses, Juhila 1994, 164).

Chapter three introduces the conceptual framework for reading research material. I begin with definition of representation of space in media texts (3.1). Next, St. Petersburg, understood as a symbolic place is conceptualised through territorial shaping (3.2) where the construction of city's identity (3.2.1) is central for drawing borders for it (3.2.2), and which gains its

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<sup>10</sup> However, the employment of these narratives is always contextual, and they mix and are contrasted with competitive and parallel interpretations of locality, of which a discourse on tolerant Petersburg is one of the most central.

meanings as a particular city through symbolic shaping (3.3). Symbolic shaping is based on understanding the city as a semiotic mediation structure, specific system of signification that is tied to the physical infrastructure of the city (3.3.1) and manifests itself in identity narratives (3.3.2).

The rest of the chapter deals more closely with the practical tools and analysis of the newspaper texts. The methodological approach to studying social construction of reality and production of meaning in texts of print media is settled as study of signification systems (3.4). Newspaper articles as an object of research are approached from a structuralist angle that takes into account the aspect of social construction of meanings (3.4.1), and the objects of news, different social and cultural groups are turned into communities of codes who make their way to the newspapers through journalist's interpretation and representation (3.4.2). Description of the research material, newspapers and process of reading (3.4.3) complete the chapter.

The analysis consists of 3 parts. The first two are accounts about the contents of migrant-related news in St. Petersburg and focus on recognizing predominant ways and characters of talking about the city. City is approached as a symbolic place (4.1.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3) and as perceived space (4.2.1, 4.2.2, 4.2.3). The final section of the analysis brings together the two spatial levels and ties them together to analyse the relations between predominant identity discourses and stereotypes about migrants in construction of spatial margins (4.3.1). The discussion shows how two separate processes of identity formation and consequent understanding of borders and margins take place in the talk about migrants, and how St. Petersburg is represented through myths rather than places (4.3.2). Also, the chapter maps metaphorical margins and centres in what are mediated as current and ideal city (4.3.3), and notes the symbolic role of migrants in the discussion about St. Petersburg's future (4.3.4). Finally, in chapter 5 I conclude my findings about St. Petersburg represented as city of increasing number of labour migrants.

## **2. Background: migration and migrants, interethnic relations and how they are portrayed in media**

The heritage of Soviet politics on ethnicity and strict control of migration created background for the proliferation of migration in the Post- Soviet period (Korobkov 2007). Since then, Russia has become one of the main destinations of international immigration, having received 10,2 million international migrants between 1991 and 2013 (Di Bartolomeo et al 2014). The political heritage of Soviet Union and establishment of new nation states in Central Asia, Transcaucasia and Baltics in the first years of the 90s created numerous new minorities in newly independent states where national affiliation grew in importance (e.g. Ivakhniuk 2006; Slezkine 2004; Korobkov 2007). In the 90s the migration waves were dominated by repatriating Russians, while after the turn of millennium immigrant workers from the former Soviet Union became the biggest group of migrants (Pilkington 1998; Korobkov 2007; Ivakhniuk 2006; Di Bartolomeo et al 2014). New migrants, regardless of their ethnicity, were perceived as competitors over resources and were held responsible for the problems society was facing. Public discourse, produced by political elites, academics and media, reinforced the negative perception of migration and contributed to a rise of xenophobic sentiment<sup>11</sup> in Russian society (Shnirelman 2009).

Not only did the disintegration of Soviet Union change the political map of borders and facilitate migration, but also dismantled the ideological framework of Marxism and Leninism. This has led to redefinition of concepts and categories in which, according to Hutchings and Tolz (2012, 877), the “interpretations and terminologies of the Soviet period are modified through the influences of late imperial Russian intellectual traditions and western interpretations of societal diversity.” In addition to its contribution to etymology of terminological apparatuses, and prevailing primordial understanding of ethnicity, historical legacy forms the background for evaluating today’s issues in media discourse on ethnicity.

### **2.1. Migration to Russia in Soviet and Post-Soviet space**

Migration policies in the Soviet Union served state’s interests to control the population and industrialise vast territories in the Northern and Eastern parts of the Union

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<sup>11</sup> The talk goes about social production of xenophobia in the public discourse about migrants. There is no causal relationship between the number of migrants and the level of xenophobia in a society (Malakhov 2004).



(Korobkov 2007; Ivakhniuk 2009). Already in the Tsarist times, Russians had been moving to the non-Russian territories of the empire, and the trend continued in the first half of Soviet Union. Population moved from Russian to ethnic republics, and Russian parts of the Soviet Union experienced net migration to other regions until 1975, after which the migration flows turned (Heleniak 2008, 45).

Migration in the Soviet Union can be roughly divided in categories of voluntary and involuntary migration (Ivakhniuk 2009). The voluntary migration was state-driven employment migration to remote industrial and construction sites, which provided people with special economic incentives for relocating. In turn, movement to developed areas and big cities like Moscow and Leningrad was restricted by the state. Different incentives (competence is salaries, arrangements related to education) were also used to advance migration of Russian speakers into ethnic republics for economic and political reasons. Such reasons included, for instance, realisation of large-scale industrial projects and changing the population structure in particular regions where national ethnic groups were considered unreliable (Korobkov 2007, 172).

Involuntary migration was another means to control population. Exile to Siberia, Kazakhstan, Central Asia and the Russian North in the 1930s advanced the industrial development of those areas. Migration thus served effectively both as an instrument of industrialisation and political suppression (Ivakhniuk 2009; Korobkov 2007). Between 1930s and 1950s forced movements were also applied to whole ethnic groups who were resettled from their native lands to Siberia and Far East (Ivakhnyuk 2009). *Propiska*<sup>12</sup> system of registration was used to control population movement in the Soviet Union. The system was introduced in 1932, and formed the basis of population management, including citizen's right to employment and access to municipal services (Höjdestrand 2011, 960). Due to the *propiska* system, even voluntary migration in the Soviet Union was controlled in nature.

Toward the end of Soviet era the liberalisation and decentralization of the regime allowed its citizens more freedom of movement. Over two million people migrated among the former Soviet republics in 1989 (Korobkov and Zaionchkovskaia 2004). Russian-speakers started gradually leaving the republics for Russian-speaking parts of the USSR, and the republics' share of ethnic population grew (Korobkov 2007). During perestroika<sup>13</sup> and in the early 90s migration was economically and politically motivated, for the state's subsidises for remote locations decreased and

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<sup>12</sup> Soviet 'residence permit', officially abolished in 1993 (Pilkington 1998, 40).

<sup>13</sup> *Perestroika*, restructuring was a period of political and economic reforms in the USSR. It lasted from 1986 to 1991 and was initiated and led by the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev (Ivakhniuk 2009, 2). *Perestroika* was aimed at transformations of centralized and stagnated Soviet economy into a decentralised and market-oriented one (Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia 2013).

tensions between ethnic groups grew (ibid). Approximately 700 000 – 1 million people from the post-Soviet states moved to Russia in annually in 1989-1993 (Pilkington 1998, 5). In 1991, by the fall of Soviet Union, 710 000 forced migrants on the territory of the USSR (Korobkov 2008, 70). Further, better living conditions attracted people to leave Russian north and peripheral regions for more central and western parts of the country (White 2007).

Current influx of labour migration from Central Asia into Russian cities is a relatively new phenomenon. Even though Imperial Russia and Soviet Union were ethnically diverse and people mobile, it was mainly the Slavic population or elites of titular nations who changed their place of residence to Russian cities (Kaiser, 1994).

Most of the people moving to Russia in the aftermath of the collapse of Soviet Union were ethnic Russians, while other titular nationalities were likely to leave during the very first half of 90s (Pilkington 1998). In 1991-1992 the population movement remained at the levels of late 80s, and the uncertain political conditions, conflicts and social instability caused people to locate into their new homelands (Ivakhniuk 2006; Korobkov and Zaionchkovskaia 2004). Mass movement of military servicemen started, and refugee flows were formed (Korobkov 2008; Pilkington 1998). Migration intensified between 1993 and 1995. Outward migration from Russia declined, but the inflow of Russian-speaking population grew due to more stable political and better economic conditions in Russia and discrimination experienced by native Russians in the CIS countries (ibid). Toward the end of 1990s the number of repatriating Russians declined, and immigration to Russia changed its character from forced and political to economically motivated migration. Rise in numbers of foreign citizens officially employed in Russia grew by 30 per cent from 1995 to 1996. During the first half of 1996, 220 000 foreign labour migrants were registered (Pilkington 1998, 10).

Russian financial crisis in 1998, having severe consequences especially in the smallest CIS countries, was one factor that contributed to socio-economic differentiation in the region. Russian population shrank by 6.6 million between 1992 and 2008, while many of the poorest CIS countries had surplus of labour (Ioffe and Zayonchkovskaya 2010). Due to these factors, economic migration from Central Asia, Azerbaijan, Armenia and Georgia to Russia grew steadily from 1993 to 1999, and migration became more temporary in character (Mukomel 2005; Korobkov 2007; Ivakhniuk 2006).

In the early 2000s numbers of permanent migrants continued to shrink and temporary labour migration expanded. Russian state attempted to form institutional foundations for migration, which however resulted in complication of migrants' position and their location to illegal sphere (Korobkov 2008). By the end of the 2000s it was estimated that Russia

had from 3 to 4 million labour migrants and rising to 5-7 million in spring and summer (Ivakhniuk 2009). Of the migrants 1 million came from Ukraine, 1,5 million from Transcaucasia, and a remarkable and growing number of migrants arrived from Central Asia (ibid, 80). Irregular migrants maintain close relations with home and family, providing them financial means from their own salaries. Long-term migrants are more likely to be young individuals who intend to stay in Russia even permanently, or they relocated their whole families in Russia (Amirkhanian, Kuznetsova... 2010). Both types of labour migrants include those who have legal status as a worker, and those who lack official documentation, and therefore fall out from official statistics. According to estimations, 70-80% of migration in Post-Soviet Russia remained unregistered at the latter half of 2000s (Ivakhniuk 2009).

The control of migration policies was liberalized in the later half of 2000s in order to ease settling of permanent migrants (Korobkov 2007). Requirements for acquiring registration and working permit were simplified, and the procedure for recruiting foreign citizens was simplified (Rozanova 2010; Ivakhnyuk 2009, 55). These new policies, coming to force in 2007, were targeted especially for the migrants from the CIS countries, thus opening the normal labour market for citizens of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. The financial crisis and rising unemployment rates however were followed by restrictions in the quotas for migrants, and banning some sectors of economy from immigrant workers in the fear of competition (Berg-Nordlie et al 2010, 9).

The role of migration from Central Asia to Russia is remarkable. According to Ryazantsev and Korneev (2014), migrants from Uzbekistan, Tajikistan Kyrgyzstan and also Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan currently account approximately 40 % migration-related population growth in Russia. Citizens of Central Asian countries constituted 60% of Russia's foreign workforce (1 640 800 foreign workers in 2010) (ibid.). However, the statistics do not give the real number of migrant workers, as the number of unregistered migrants exceeds the official numbers. Estimations of the number of unregistered, so called illegal labour migrants vary from exaggerated political opinions of 10 – 15 million to expert's figures that vary between 2 and 5 million (Ryazantsev and Korneev 2014).

## **2.2 Migration policies**

Large number of unregistered workers is not so much result of the growth in the number of migrants as it is Russia's institutional capacity's inability to respond to the growing

migration flows. Migration policies in Russia after the fall of USSR were at first missing, and later emerged within the frame of security and fight against terrorism (Mukomel' 2005).

Attitudes toward migration in the early 1990s were very liberal, and focused mainly on coping with refugees and forced migrants (Ivakhniuk 2009). The government practised non-interference politics, and the Bishek Agreement of visa-free entry for CIS citizens was signed in 1992, guaranteeing the free movement of people over the newly established borders (Rozanova 2010, 42). The *propiska* system of registration was officially abolished in 1993, thus place of residence could be registered instead of granted (Pilkington 1998). Even though many people moving to Russia were a granted legal status and Russian citizenship, the shortcomings in Russian legislation on migration resulted in over 3 million permanent migrants without any status or legal rights (Ivakhnyk 2009, 28).

After the laissez-faire approach in the beginning of 1990s, instability and fear of conflicts shifted the focus of migration policies toward restrictions and prohibitions instead of integration of migrants (Mukomel' 2005, 49; Shnirelman 2009, 140). The deficit of immigration and emigration policies in the CIS states combined with the migration pressure especially from Central Asia, Caucasus, Moldova and Ukraine led to even growing number of migrants who could not legalize their status in Russia (Ivakhniuk 2009, 34). Furthermore, immigration from other than former Soviet Union countries grew, and Russia became a convenient country for transit migration to the European Union, and a route for human and drug traffickers (ibid.). Uncontrolled migration, coupled with the growing concern over terrorism (especially after 9/11), was considered as a source of social instability.

The dominance of security approach culminated in naming irregular migration as a primary threat for national security in the early 2000s (Rozanova 2010). Battle against illegal migration became the initial focus of migration policies, but the lack of transparency and tightening of the legal status of foreigners paradoxically increased the number of illegal migrants in the country (Rozanova 2010; Mukomel 2006).

A new law on the Legal Status of Foreign Citizens was approved in 2002 in order to regulate the legal situation of non-status migrants. The purpose was to set transparent procedures for obtaining residential status for new migrants, but the security-driven strategy of migration politics resulted in controlling the number and structure of migrants (Ivakhniuk 2009, 39). Furthermore, the lack of transparency in the actions of Federal Migration Service and widespread corruption made illegal migrants a major source for Russian officers (Ivakhniuk 2009, 38).

Surveys from the mid-2000s show that half of the migrants lacked official registration in their place of residence (registration system in the place of Soviet *propiska*), and only one fifth of

migrants were employed officially. Despite the official abolishment of the *propiska*, local authorities were left the ability to define procedures and conditions for registration, thus complicating the process for labour and forced migrants (Pilkington 1998). Missing registration was found to be an important factor leading to failures to make employment official (Ivakhniuk 2009). In 2003 alone, 45, 000 unauthorized migrant workers were deported from the Russian Federation, and over 1.5 million were fined (ibid. 46.). The results of tight regulative policies thus failed to decrease the number of non-status migrants, and pushed migrants and their economic activities to the sphere of grey economy.

Liberalization of migration policies started in the latter half of the 2000s. Requirements for acquiring registration and working permit were eased, and the procedure for recruiting foreign citizens was simplified (Rozanova 2010; Ivakhnyuk 2009, 55). These new policies, coming to force in 2007, were targeted especially for the migrants from the CIS countries, thus opening the normal labour market for citizens of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Ukraine. The financial crisis and rising unemployment rates however were followed by restrictions in the quotas for migrants, and banning some sectors of economy from immigrant workers in the fear of competition (Berg-Nordlie et al 2010, 9).

Patents for labour migrants working for private persons were introduced in 2010. This systems for people coming from visa-free countries and was considered as a major improvement for the situation. Between 2010 and 2012 the over 2 million workers obtained the patent from the Federal Migration Service. However, obtaining quota-based work permits remains inaccessible and expensive for migrants, who consequently prefer obtaining patents regardless of their sphere of employment. Ryaznitsev and Korneev (2014, 39) conclude that currently “Russian authorities simply register labour migration from abroad instead of managing it.”

Even though migration policies have been revised and rationalized, there are still many shortages in legislation. One of the main institutional banners for migrants’ integration is the system of registration, which, even though revised, dates from the Soviet practise of controlling population movements (Ivakhniuk, 2009, 12). This registration has become an institutional obstacle that divides people to administrative categories of permanent citizens, those with temporary registration, and illegal migrants. The term ‘illegal’ often used with unregistered, irregular migrants is rather misleading (Korobkov 2008). Most migrants come from visa-free regime and thus enter Russia legally, but due to the heavy bureaucracy fail to register in their place of residence and acquire working permit thus falling to the sphere of unofficial employment (Karpenko 2004). In public discourse migrants’ unregistered residence in Russia is always treated as a problem that

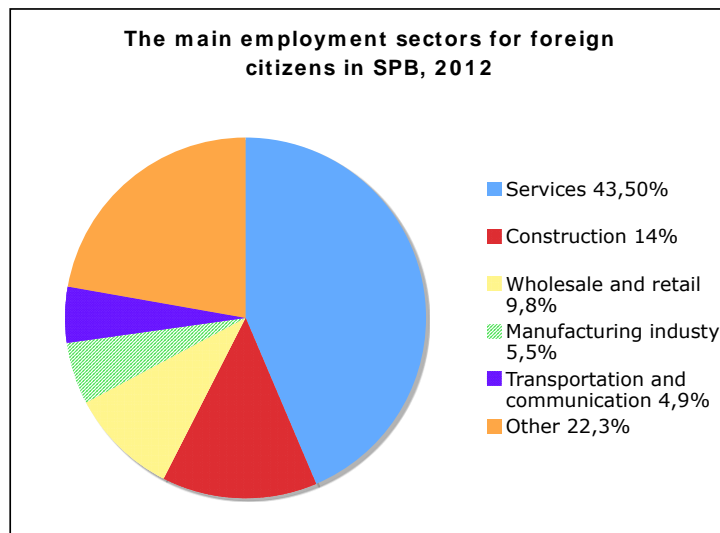
needs to be taken care of by increasing regulation and tightening legislation, “civilizing” migration (Berg-Nordlie et al 2010).

In addition to problematizing labour migrants’ social, legal and economic position, institutional weakness contributes to people’s attitudes on migration. Levada centre’s study shows how people’s attitude toward desired policy of migration has changed. In 2002 45% of Russians agreed to a statement “The inflow of migrants should be restricted”, whereas in 2010 already 60% thought so. Respectively, the statement “There should be no administrative barriers for newcomers, and they should work for the good of Russia” was supported by 44%, and only 27% in 2010. (Levada Centre 2011). Despite the fact that change in attitudes is influenced by changes in migration policies, the hardened attitudes toward migration is quite remarkable.

## **2.3 Positioning migrant workers in St. Petersburg’s labour market and society**

Recent development of St. Petersburg has created a great demand for labour, which has been met with migration from former Soviet republics. In 2012, the Federal Migration Agency (FMS Rossii) issued more than 250 000 working permits for foreign citizens in Petersburg. The great majority (119 988; 64%) of the permits were issued for citizens of Uzbekistan, Tajiks holding the second position (30 438; 17%). Ukrainian and Moldavians were represented by 8% and 4%, respectively (UFMS Rossii 2012). Workers from the countries with visa obligations workers are fewer in numbers, coming mainly from Turkey (3 011 persons) and China (2 658). However, the number of issued working permits cannot be read as the real number of guest workers, for many of the migrants work without contracts and official documentation. The number of foreign citizens or people without citizenship accused of illegal stay in Russian Federation by the FMS Petersburg has remained quite steady in recent years. In 2012, their number was 11 248 (UFMS Rossii 2012). The estimations of actual number of unregistered migrants vary. According to one estimation, 100 000 – 150 000 people work in Petersburg annually without all official documents (Komitet po migratsionnaia kontrolya 2014).

For the recently arrived migrants work is the most important attraction in Russia and Petersburg. Migrants are employed mainly in low-skilled jobs in the public service, construction, maintenance, and public transportation, wholesale and retail (Ivakhniuk 2009). These sectors rely on cheap migrant labour, for the jobs are undesired by many Russians (Mukomel 2005; Rozanova 2010).



**Figure 1: The main employment sectors for foreign citizens in St.Petersburg (UFMS Rossii 2013)**

As the figure 1 indicates, most of the working permits for foreign individuals are issued for services and construction<sup>14</sup>. Service sector includes, maintenance of city infrastructure, as many of the migrant workers are employed in private companies as street sweepers and janitors. Construction is the second biggest employment sector. Currently the unsecure legal status of migrants makes it is profitable for employers to hire foreigners. Without legal status migrants have to rely on the employer: low and unpaid salaries, bad working conditions and risk of being deported are common issues for migrant workers (Mukomel' 2006; Ryazantsev and Korneev 2013). Estimates of migrants' average workweek vary from 53 to 66 hours (Korobkov 2008).

### **2.3.1 Homing of migrants in St. Petersburg**

The spatial perspective to studying labour migration often emphasize the polarization of cities into dual constructions of ethnic and local space. Migrants are studied in "ethnic neighbourhoods" or slums, which are separate from the districts where local population lives (Kaladides and Vaiou 2012; Nowak 2010). In this sense Petersburg is somewhat exceptional. Due to the legacy of Soviet housing policies and rather short history of labour migration, residential segregation has not taken place. Migrants, locals and more established minorities share the same physical infrastructure and encounter each other in the everyday life of the city (Brednikova and Tkach 2010).

Despite the lack of residential segregation, labour migrants are poorly adapted in the social life of the city. One of the main barriers for migrants' integration is institutional weakness

<sup>14</sup> Statistics about the share of migrants are somewhat contradictory: according to another estimation retail and construction cover 60% of employment sectors (*Komitet po trudu* 2013: <http://ktzn.gov.spb.ru/analiticheskaya-informaciya/rezultaty-nir/>)

and a system of registration (Ivakhniuk, 2009, 12). Without proper documents, the migrants have to work without working permits and contracts; they cannot officially rent housing or check in dormitories, and are required to pay bribes avoid being fined for illegal stay. The system thus comprehensively pushes highly demanded labour inflow from the CIS states to illegal sphere of employment and living<sup>15</sup>.

Public perception of migrants tends to imagine them living in ethnic enclaves (Dixon 2012), and ethnic economies are characters many Russians associate with economic sectors where migrants work. Ethnic connotation is perceived as a negative one, and its makes the “ethnic” jobs unattractive for Russians (Gdaniec 2010, 11). The definition is extended also to location of the jobs, marking for instance market as places where majority population feels themselves excluded (ibid.). However, the economic sectors where migrants work can be defined as multicultural rather than ethnic: economic benefits and profit override ethnic boundaries in business that is profitable across cultural and ethnic borders (Brednikova & Pachenkov 1999, 8; Brednikova and Pachenkov 2003). Level of ethnic organisation is rather low in Petersburg, and communities are formed on basis of time of residence in the city, level of adaptation and social status (Voronkov & Oswald 1998).

Studies about spatial othering of migrants and minorities in terms of restricting their movement in physical space by legislative means (Anderson 2009, 106) may be applicable to describe migrants’ situation in St. Petersburg. Despite the lack of residential segregation and ethnic economies, migrants are somewhat excluded from the urban space and society. According to Brednikova and Pachenkov (1999), work is often the primary network of labour migrants. Migrants tend to share low-cost flats with their co-workers, and prefer to live close to their workplace<sup>16</sup>. Their daily social contacts can be restricted to customers, police officers and people met during commute between home and work (Brednikova and Pachenko 1999; 2003; Brednikova and Tkach 2010). Long working hours explain the spatial behavior of migrants on one part, but the use of urban space is also restricted by vulnerable social position, labour migrants’ legal status and xenophobic attitudes of majority population (Gdaniec 2010, 13; Dixon 2012, 41). Also, in the lack of legal documents and fear of corruption, migrants restrict their movement in order to avoid contact with police officers (Brednikova & Pachenkov 2002, 55). ). In the context of public space, people with non-Russian appearance are the most disadvantaged. According to Kosygina (2010, 52-53) those migrants suffer the most from social exclusion, which includes deprivation of rights and

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that most of the workers labelled as illegals come from within visa-free regime (Berg-Nordlie et al 2010), thus officially being over-stayers rather than illegal immigrants.

<sup>16</sup> Despite the lack of segregation on district level, migrants are discriminated at Russian rental markets, and their housing conditions are rather poor. According to a research by *Komitet po trudy* (2013), more than half of labour migrants live in conditions that do not meet the minimum requirements sanitary norms: of 6 m<sup>2</sup> of living space per person.



resources that should be available for all the members of the society. Discrimination based on physical appearance appears on all the levels of society.

## **2.4 Inter-ethnic relations and Russian national idea**

Even though this study does not directly aim at discussing migrants and migration in the framework of inter-ethnic conflict, racism or xenophobia, these issues are central for the media language on migrants, and contribute to the ways how and where the migrants are represented in newspaper articles. Media discourse on migration and cultural diversity is often framed in terms of ethnicity, and migrants are conceptualised as ethnic others, against whom the self, defined in national or local terms, becomes constructed. Imperial and Soviet considerations of diversity are important for understanding how Russian national identity is localised in St. Petersburg, and how the local identities differ from the national ones.

Widely studied in academic literature, current Russian nationalism appears as a complex phenomenon that is constantly negotiated and defined against the late imperial and Soviet histories on one hand, and between the official language of multiculturalism and attitudes of the public on the other. Several scholars conclude that the attempts to create civic version of Russian nationalism have failed, whereas an ethnic definition is gaining popularity, thus increasing inter-ethnic tensions in the multicultural county. In addition to civic and ethnic definitions, there has also been discussion about cultural nationalism, which relies more on people's willingness and ability to communicate through mutually shared cultural categories that represent what is understood as Russian (Pirainen 2002).

Deeply rooted understanding of connection between ethnicity and territory still echoes in the public discussion as non-Russian residents became addressed as "guests" in the Russian cities where they might have lived for generations. According to Hutchings and Tolz (2012), Russians are the only group that is associated with the territory of Russian Federation as a whole, leading to the popular perception of Russians as native population in big cities like Moscow and Petersburg. The Post-Soviet Russia has also witnessed re-fashioning of late imperial and emigrant ideas of Russian nation. Civilizational approach and Eurasianism mix with the soviet understanding of ethnicity and nations.

Dissolution of the Soviet Union resulted in mass migration of population to Russian cities. While the remote areas of former Soviet Union lost population, the cities were faced with increasing unemployment, social unrest and economic instability. New migrants, regardless of their

ethnicity, were perceived as competitors over resources and were held responsible for the problems society was facing. Public discourse, produced by political elites, academics and media, reinforced the negative perception of migration (Shnirelman 2009). According to official surveys, more than 50 per cent of Russians have been reported sharing ethno-xenophobic sentiments (Verkhovsky 2009).

#### **2.4.1 Imperial multiculturalism: from Muscovites toward modern nation state**

The way in which different peoples, languages and religions were understood and conceptualized in the Russian empire developed and varied over time. Even before the conquest of Kazan in 1552, various groups inhabited the medieval Muscovite state. The Muscovite approach to minorities was characterized as pragmatic and flexible, allowing the existence of different cultures with their own social order as long as people remained loyal tribute payers (Kappeler 2011, 114). Religion and the term *inovertsy*, those of other religion, was the main character that separated the groups collectively from the Orthodox Christians (Werth 2008, 171).

The European influence in Russia grew in the turn of 17th and 18th century. Tsar Peter I started a series of reforms that aimed at modernizing the country along European ideals. Modernization also marked the beginning of imperial thinking that over time entwined the emerging idea of Russian essence with imperial ideas (Oittinen 2007, 15). Peter I established the city of St. Petersburg to serve as the new capital of the empire, and a port through which European ideas could reach Russia. Russian national culture started developing in Petersburg as an imperial one, spreading throughout the empire as the influence of Petersburg as a cultural capital grew (Hellberg-Hirn 2003, 70-71). European influence and need to inhabit the Central European parts of the expanding empire also marked the beginning of migration policies. The State Migration Management Department was established in 1763 to attract Western Europeans to move to rural Russia, while Russian peasants were unable to migrate until serfdom was abolished in 1861 (Ivakhniuk 2009).

The expanding empire consisted of several traditional, rural civilizations that had their own cultures and religions (Dragunskii 1993). Gradually, as the European ideas of nation state and Russian messianic self-understanding gained popularity, the pragmatic attitude toward Asiatic peoples of the empire changed toward missionary attempts to civilize the barbarians by converting them to Orthodoxy. A term *inorodtsy*, which originally referred to small groups living in Siberia, became an administrative and official term for all non-Russian groups of the empire.

The extended category of *inorodtsy* was accompanied by a larger shift that aimed at reforming and modernizing the empire in order to keep up with the other European countries.

*Inorodtsy* became targets of Russification policies that aimed at cultural assimilation of non-Russian peoples. Furthermore, with the new imperial understanding Russia was suggested to be in a unique position to spread European civilization to Asia, which legitimated the expansion of the empire and cultural hegemony as a historical mission of Russian nation. This view culminated with the conquest of Central Asia in the mid-19th century, which was interpreted as a victory of civilization over barbarity. *Inorodtsy* thus represented the late imperial understanding of otherness, which was strongly associated with being backward (Slezkine 1994).

As the nationalist ideas of Russian people as a cornerstone of the empire gained popularity, the legitimacy of dynastic and estate-based imperial loyalty became questioned. The traditional heterogeneity of the empire now posed a threat to its integrity, and aliens “began to be associated with separatism and potential threats” thus gaining a negative connotation to the term *inorodtsy* (Campbell 2007, 320).

#### **2.4.2 Imperial ideologies: Slavophiles, Eurasianism and Civilizational approach**

The relations between Russian population and other people have been conceptualized as Russia has sought its own position and role within the world context. The balancing between east and west has been characteristic for Russian imperial self-understanding. While some preferred to emphasize Russia’s close connections and integrity with the European countries and understood Russia as a bridge between east and west, others conceptualised Russia as a separate, Eurasian civilization, which embraces the idea of Russia as a Eurasian superpower surrounded by other, fundamentally different civilizations. In the imperial philosophical this discussion about Russia’s position happened between western-oriented *Zapadniki*, and conservative Slavophiles. Early 20<sup>th</sup> century ideas of Eurasianism were rooted in the thinking of Slavophiles. After the dissolution of Soviet Union especially the late imperial and emigrant ideas have gained popularity.

The debate over Russian position continues in the media discourse of migration that relies on historical interpretations, while scaling Russia with the wider geographical context of Europe, Asia, and global migration. Especially Gumilev’s Eurasianism has played a remarkable role in the current understanding of biologically and geographically determined ethnic groups whose mutual relations and interaction would result in inevitable conflict in the sense of Huntington’s infamous clash of civilizations (Shnirelman 2009). This approach is aimed at forming an integrated Russian civilization that recognizes plurality of cultures in Eurasia, but which denies the possibility of cultural diversity.

Current Russian nationalists favour the civilizational approach with its different variations of Russian chauvinism (Shnirelman 2009). Also Russia's position in the Europe is present in the discourses, thus implying that both approaches are simultaneously present and employed contextually in the media discourse. St.Petersburg holds an interesting position in this debate being a cultural base for European understanding of Russia, and simultaneously attempting to re-create its imperial image as a project to elevate its status from former capital to the position of cultural capital of Russia (Hellberg-Hirn 2003, 70-71).

### **2.4.3 Soviet heritage**

The imperial order in Russian federation had lost its cohesive ability within the attempts to modernize the multicultural empire, formerly united only by a common affiliation to traditional imperial estate-based rural order and civilization. As the new Bolshevik regime was left with the unfinished task of modernization, they had to find a way to solve the "national question" and restructure the space of former tsarist empire (Dragunskii 1993). The Soviet Union inherited the diversity of Russian Empire at the time when the national ideas were gaining popularity. According to Slezkine (1994, 427), "[o]n the eve of the revolution, Russia had census nationalities, nationalist parties and national "questions," but it had no official view of what constituted nationality". This administrative void would rapidly change with the Bolshevik national policies that institutionalized and territorialized ethnicity both on administrative and individual levels.

Soviet policies of ethnicity were not a consistence whole, instead developing as ad hoc solutions to situations that required acknowledgement of diversity in construction of the communist state and realization of ideology. The ultimate goal of ethnic policies was to create a united Soviet nation, in which ethnic or national differences would be outplayed with a unifying idea of socialism. The foundation of national policies was Lenin's understanding of *the reality of nations* that were entitled to *national rights*. However, the most comprehensive definition for a nation was drawn by Stalin, who conceptualized it as "*a historically evolved, stable community based on a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture*" (I.V. Stalin in Slezkine 1994, 416). The common line of thought understood nations as being sovereign and equal, recognizing differences only in the stage of development (Slezkine 1994).

The policies of ethnicity took a form of ethnoterritorialism, which institutionalised ethnicity both on the state and individual levels (Brubaker 1994). Rights of "backward nations" were to be promoted as a compensation of the oppression that bourgeoisie nation had practised before the revolution. Paradoxically, the attempts to get away with ethnic differences resulted in

creation and enforcement of established categories. Ethnic categories were created as a means to manage and control population and organize political space (Malakhov and Osipov 2006). Restructured empire consisted of four hierarchical levels of territory collectives that formed national homelands for titular ethnic groups: union republics, autonomous republics, autonomous oblasts, and autonomous okrugs (Dragunskii 1993). Obviously, the imposed structure did not correlate with the real ethnic composition, which resulted in great numbers of “misplaced” minorities, people who lived outside their titular territories and were thus left without the advantages that were available for them in “their own” republics (Slezkine 1994).

Russians were in a special position as the only ethnic group without a designated homeland. On one hand, Russian nation was blamed for oppressing the other nationalities who were victims of “tsarist-imposed statelessness, backwardness and ‘culturelessness’ [*nekul’turnost*]” (Slezkine 1994, 423). This kind of nationalism was understood as being bourgeoisie, and thus wrong. Affirmative action that benefited the other nationalities was aimed at outplaying the harms of imperial Russian chauvinism, and the Russians were denied national rights until the rest of the newly institutionalized nations would catch up. On the other hand, Russians effectively controlled the state institutions (Brubaker 1994).

The oppression of Russian nationalism did not last long. After Stalin in the 1930s decided the end of backwardness, Russians were given back their national rights, and Russian language started dominating as the lingua franca of the empire, and the Russians were increasingly identified with the whole Soviet Union (Slezkine 1994). Furthermore, since 1940s the late imperial idea of civilizing task of Russian culture as the bearer of the highest share of material and intellectual resources in relation to backward other nations was refashioned by the Soviet leaders (Shnirelman 2009, 137).

Soviet policies of ethnicity were institutionalized not only in policies and territorial structure of the Union, but also categorized individuals in terms of ethnicity. As nationalities became defined within territorial borders, individuals became defined by certain nationality. Internal passport system was introduced in the 1930s in order to control the population and its movements (Ivakhniuk 2009). The nationality of each individual was stated in the passport, and being stated in the birth, became a biological category that could not be changed (Slezkine 1994). This system froze ethnicity as a primordial, institutionally confirmed category, and was completely insensitive to individual feelings of national belonging. In reality, especially the smaller nationalities had more fluid idea about subjective nationality that included several possibilities of overlapping social identities that were employed contextually (Lapidus 1984).

Another means of control introduced with the passports was the *propiska* system that put an end to the uncontrolled migration that was initiated by social change and general shortages that followed the revolution. *Propiska* tied people to their place of residence, and movement especially to big cities was restricted (Ivakhniuk 2009, 6).

In addition to political institutions, Soviet policies on nationalities included production of cultural institutions, a project of *korenizatsia*, indigenization. Creation of national pasts and narratives was an integral part of this policy. Titular nations were encouraged to name their own national classics and histories to legitimately appear as national states (Drakunskii 1993; Slezkine 1994)<sup>17</sup>. Thus each nation and nationality became attributed with its own culture that was highly integrative, “reserved” for the members, but essentially excluded bearers of other cultures. However, the unity and cohesion among the peoples of USSR was also promoted. A concept of internationalism was employed to articulate the close ties among the nationalities and gained even more depth with a later expression of “friendship of the nations”, which requested appreciation and recognition of the art and histories of other Soviet nationalities in a spirit of brotherhood (Slezkine 1994). This Soviet discourse is still relevant in the ways many people, including migrants themselves conceptualize the issue of diversity (Brednikova and Pachenkov 2002), and, as will be discussed in the analysis, is also employed in media texts for various purposes.

Despite the official abandonment of Soviet ideologies and even conscious turn away from them, the current discussion on migration and ethnic relations can’t be separated from the legacy of Soviet ethnic and national policies, which keep shaping the ways in which national questions and migrants are discussed today (Brubaker, 1994). The Soviet slogans about internationalism, friendship of the nations, and common experience of the Great Patriotic War are constantly evoked in media reporting on inter-ethnic relations (e.g. Hutchings and Tolz 2012, my analysis). Furthermore, the Soviet symbolism and identity are still present in older generation’s thinking and understanding. In the context of St. Petersburg this becomes evident in the way the memory of Leningrad is negotiated in relation to current developments.

#### **2.4.4 Interethnic tensions**

Academic explanations for growing xenophobic sentiment in Russia refer to mass migrations in the Post-Soviet region, the second war in Chechnya and terrorist attacks (for instance Beslan in 2004, Moscow subway Bombing in 2010), with a special emphasis on the media’s role in exacerbating xenophobic tensions within Russian society (Verkhovsky 2009; Clowes 2011, 140;

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<sup>17</sup> Later the results of this imposed construction of nations became visible in the national demands to return to the rights that were granted to the nationalities before the 1930s.

Petersson 2008). Xenophobic sentiment has been targeting especially peoples from Caucasus, referred to by a collective expression of “*litso kavkazskoi natsional’nosti*”, persons of Caucasian nationality. These Caucasians have been attributed with strong enemy images in connection to wars in Chechnya and branding it as a war against terrorism in official talk (Voronkov and Oswald 1998). This resulted in reassertion of xenophobic attitudes toward the “other south”, which stands against an idea to form a tolerant, multicultural citizenship in Russia (Clowes 2011, 162).

Shnirelman (2009, 127) in turn argues that the idea cultural pluralism is weakly developed due to a strong tendency to favor civilizational approach in explaining cultural relations in Russia. The civilizational approach represents Russia as a unique cultural entity, within which the whole Russia’s population should be included as a single, cohesive cultural unit. Verkhovsky (2009) further adds that current migrant-phobia is a fusion of social xenophobia and ethno-xenophobia, which have been present since the Soviet times. This concept is one that makes both foreigners and compatriots unwelcome, thus widening the scope of attention from the category of racism to wider understanding of prejudice against socio-cultural others.

Xenophobia gained ethnic connotations while the character of migration changed. Toward the end of 1990s the number of repatriating Russians declined, and was replaced by economic migration from the Central Asian states, Ukraine, Moldova and Caucasus (Voronkov and Oswald 1998). This period marked relative stabilization of migration, and socioeconomic factors started formatting the migration flows. During this time the prejudice toward newcomers remained the same, but the language used for talking about migrants was coloured with ethnic references and even racist expressions about armies of barbarians, and floods of hot-blooded migrants (Shnirelman 2009). This discourse did not stay within the media reporting, but was also adopted by intellectual and political elites (ibid.). The economic demand for cheap low-skilled labour force in Russian industries was high, and at times the migration got also more positive connotations. However, the economic crisis in the late 2000s reversed this trend, and migrants were again perceived as competitors (Berg-Nordlie et al.). The financial crisis and rising unemployment rates were followed by restrictions in the quotas for migrants, and banning some sectors of economy from immigrant workers in the fear of competition (ibid. 9).

Xenophobic attitudes in the Russian society are reported to have a connection to the rising popularity of extremist ideologies (e.g. Mikhailova 2011). In the beginning of 2000s Russian skinhead movement broke into publicity by forming an extra-parliamentary party, and revealing a social base that was agreeing to their ideas (Laruelle 2009, 32). Also in the mainstream politics, fight against migrants and illegal migrants have become an effective political tool to attract voters (Verkhovsky 2009, 95). As will be indicated in the analysis, extremism is often constructed as a

problem for realization of multiculturalism in the press. Nationalist extreme movements are perceived as a threat for migrants themselves, and also for the society as a whole. Fear of extremism legitimises banning of non-governmental action promoting migrants', calls for assimilation of migrants and even legitimated anti-migration arguments. This view is based on widely accepted myth about the correlation between xenophobic sentiment and number of migrants in the society (Malakhov 2004).

## **2.5 Ethnic relations in Imperial St. Petersburg and Soviet Leningrad: Cosmopolitan capital and hero city**

“Petersburg began by borrowing everything European and ended by negating its own cosmopolitan character.” (Hellberg-Hirn 2003, 71).

The Russian window onto Europe was established on territories that were not considered as belonging to Russian Empire until 1721 (Brumfield 2008, 3). This area was an important trade route that was inhabited first by Scandinavian and Slavic merchants, and became dominated by Finnish and Balto-Finnish speaking peasants by the late 17<sup>th</sup> century (Duke 2008, 144). The construction of the new capital put the former inhabitants of the Neva river delta under the rule of Peter I. The population of the region grew as the new emperor ordered serfs and prisoners of the Northern war to come and build the new capital (Brumfield 2008). The ambitious project to build a European city of stone on the marshlands did not come without a price: Even today the Petersburg is known as a city that stands on the bones of the people who died building it (Buckler 2005, 116).

Petersburg grew dynamically as a multicultural city, and elevated its status as the Northern Capital of Russian Empire. It challenged the inward-looking and xenophobic Moscow, becoming the cultural and political centre of the empire that absorbed European influence while imagining itself as a new Rome. According to Hellberg-Hirn (2003), imperial Petersburg mixed Russian and foreign cultural patterns in a truly cosmopolitan way. The city inhabited foreign nobility, diplomats and generals, but also scientists, architects, artists, artisans, teachers, industrialists and other professionals. German and French languages were not only the languages in the court, but were also present on the streets. Petersburg was a multicultural and multilingual city and foreigners formed a remarkable part of its population on many social sectors (ibid.).

Petersburg did not attract only European immigrants. People, mostly peasants from other parts of Russian empire also moved to the city to work in the industries (Economakis 1997). In the 18<sup>th</sup> century foreigners and non-Russian imperial subjects lived in separate neighbourhoods,



*slobody*, that were built apart from the areas reserved for “Russian” inhabitants. As the city grew, Russian neighbourhoods gradually merged with these *slobody* (Duke, 2008, 145). By the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, the city’s population had grown to over 2 million (Volkov 1996, 242). Petersburg attracted ethnic and religious minorities because the city had “high society”, wide range of economic opportunities, and higher education<sup>18</sup>.

Contrast between the wealthy Petersburg population and the poor was remarkable, and became also reflected in literature tradition and specific dual image of St. Petersburg, one emphasising the majestic character of the city, the other the poor population that was contrasted to the imperial luxury (Rabzhaeva and Semenov 2003). Concern over the social other started rising among the intelligentsia, but interestingly did not extend to the imperial ethnic others like Finns, Kalmyks, Jews, Chechens, or other Caucasians (Hellberg-Hirn 2003, 84). Thus the exclusive fault lines emerged between the imperial self (European-influenced), rest of the Russia (traditional, Muscovite), and the imperial others (*inorodtsy*). These are important factors in understanding the local identities in Petersburg.

As Rabzhaeva and Semenov (2003) write, the pre-revolutionary the idea of Petersburg’s citizens was heterogeneous, and the emerging population groups followed the lines of social classes: the status of Petersburgers was for intellectual elites and members of intelligentsia, while Peterites consisted of the proletariat, and residents of Petersburg were the social elite. Later, all the members of elites were referred to as ‘Petersburgers’, a term that carried negative and elitist connotations.

After the revolution in 1917 Petersburg lost a lot of its former status. A remarkable part of population fled the city, and eventually the capital was moved to Moscow. Petersburg (known as Petrograd during the First World War), representing the old order with its name and architecture, was re-named as Leningrad (Trumbull 2011). The changes in population put an end to the international demography of the city: As a result of revolutionary executions, civil war, hunger and emigration, the city’s population fell from 2,300 000 to 1,400 000 between 1917 and 1918 (Hellberg-Hirn 2003, 98). In 1920, the population was only 722,000 (Trumbull 2011). Hellberg-Hirn (2003, 100) writes rather dramatically about the disappearance of the former Petersburg population, while the city gradually started gaining new residents from the peasants of Russian provinces.

Migration in Soviet Union was government controlled. Moving to Leningrad was primarily concerned with upward mobility in society, and living in a “closed city”, where official

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<sup>18</sup> It should be noted that the character of ethnic migration focused on the highest levels of socio-economic hierarchies, and thus differs from the current labour migration (see Kraiser 1994).

residence required state issued permit (*propiska*), became a privileged. In order to receive the permit for temporary residents, migrants were to attend educational institutes or marry Leningraders. Seasonal migrants worked mainly as traders. Minorities in Central Asia and Caucasus were in the city, but the South-North migration before the end of Soviet period was modest (Sahadeo 2012).

Cosmopolitan culture and religious diversity were destroyed by the Soviet policies and purges (Hellberg-Hirn 2003, 367). The former cultural capital became a new periphery as the cultural values were redefined and the symbolic order replaced with Soviet system. Antireligious campaigns turned many churches, cathedrals and monasteries into storages and sports facilities, while other venues were demolished (Trumbull 2011).

Even though the imperial cosmopolitanism of St. Petersburg was not part of the Leningrad culture, the Soviet ideologies were not purely promoting Russian national culture. However, Leningrad was developing its own culture, and especially the wartime blockade effectively welded together the city's social structure (Rabzhaeva and Semenov 2003). The Soviet slogans about internationalism, friendship of the nations, and common experience of the Great Patriotic War are constantly evoked in media reporting on inter-ethnic relations (e.g. Hutchings and Tolz 2012, Lieven 2003; analysis). Furthermore, the Soviet symbolism and identity are still present in older generation's thinking and understanding. In the context of St. Petersburg this becomes evident in the way the memory of Leningrad is negotiated in relation to current developments.

How the historical diversity of Petersburg is understood today, depends a lot on the way history is written and employed in current discourse about the city. According to Duke (2008, 142-143), the image of St. Petersburg is composed only of Russians in the minds of its residents. He addresses the reason of ignored multi-ethnic heritage of the city to the Soviet ideology and policies having a clear focus on "friendship of nations" and creation of *homo sovieticus*. He also notes that international scholars have likewise ignored the multi-ethnic history of Petersburg in a manner that doesn't do justice for the diversity of imperial Russia. This view is challenged by many writers who understand Petersburg as a city of newcomers. Especially the European character of the city is emphasized, while the newcomers from other parts of Russian empire are largely referred to as peasants in the historical imaginary of the city<sup>19</sup> (Hellberg-Hirn 2003).

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<sup>19</sup> Consideration of conceptual development is vital here. People in pre-revolutionary Russia were divided not only on the basis on their ethnicity, but also on rural-urban axis, which included the aspect of religion. *Inorodtsy* as imperial others were not only representatives of other ethnic groups, but could include anyone who was understood as being culturally "backward", peasants (Slezkine 2004). Perhaps, in the imperial reading, the peasants did not contribute to the discursive multiculturalism in Petersburg despite the ethnic groups they represented. This consideration may be valid even today as the migrants are treated with double standards: being subjects of racialization on one hand, and as a

## 2.6 Discourses on migrants and multiculturalism in Russian media

Increasing labour migration to Russia has diversified demographic composition in receiving localities, as the proportion of people from the former Soviet Republics, especially Central Asian countries, has grown. With the changing demographic structure also traditional definitions of categories such as “us” and “them”, and “migrant” and “native” have to be re-envisioned (Haavisto 2011, 12). Media play an active role in this process, for they have a formative influence on societies’ values and prejudice (Richardson 2007), and they shape the reader community’s idea about the norms of its way of life. With discriminative forms of writing and inclusionary and exclusionary notions of belonging, the media defines the community’s boundaries and those who can “*feel ‘at home’ in that community*” (Allan, 1999: 172).

The media image of migrants and migrations has been rather negative in Russia, and it has contributed to spreading xenophobic tendencies within Russian society (Laruelle 2009, 26; Karpenko 2004; Peshkova, 2009). The growing number of labour migrants in the turn of the millennium was coloured in the national media with sensationalism and images of catastrophe (Shnirelman 2009, 138) while the problem-oriented talk about migrants started already with the mass migrations in the 1990s. Regardless of the real cause of occurring social problems, in public talk both internal and international migrants were blamed for violating the social order, unemployment of native population, illegal claims for pensions, establishing residential ethnic quarters, and threatening the native way of life. Furthermore, unwillingness to integrate and migrants’ habit to promote and impose their own culture upon the natives’ was one of the most common accusations (ibid.).

### 2.6.1 Migrants in media texts

In the media and public use of language the Russian word migrant has lost its original meaning that refers to any people changing their region of residence (within or across international borders), and became to signify people who or whose parents moved from Caucasus or Central Asia to what is perceived as traditional homeland for ethnic Russians (Mikhailova 2011, 527). This kind of understanding of migration and racialization process emerges from ethnocentric discourse that interprets social differences as ethnic ones, and equals cultural and ethnic identities (Malakhov 2004; Peshkova 2009). Racialisation can be defined “*a representational process of constructing the*

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separate social class of guest worker on the other, while their actual ethnicity and self-identification do not contribute to the accumulation of diverse cultural capital.

*'Other' by ascribing meaning to real and imagined biological characteristics of people*“ (Kosygina 2010, 52). It is worth noting that also cultural racism, which naturalises cultural rather than biological differences of different groups, is also prevalent in Russian media (Karpenko 2014).

In the Russian context people, referred to with a collective term migrants, are not always distinguished from locals according to self-defined ethnicities<sup>20</sup> or nationalities, but are interchangeably referred to as guest workers (*gastarbaitery*) “non-Russians” and foreigners (*nerusskiye*), arrivals (*priezhie*), “blacks” (*chernye*), “southerners” (*yuzhane*) or “persons of Caucasian nationality” (*litsa kavkazkoi national'nosti*). This conceptual inaccuracy is very insensitive both to ethnic diversity of migration, and to the fact whether the person in question person has migrated at all.

According to Shnirelman (2009), the racist discourse is based on opposing categories of indigenous/non-indigenous, or native/non-native, and further embedded in the idea of cultural incompatibility. This discourse, shared by politicians, journalists and ordinary people is marked with expressions like “migration flood”, “army of barbarians” and “alien south”. Talk about migration, and especially “fight against illegal migration” has become a big issue also in politics (Laruelle 2009, 32). Negative aspects of migration and need to control, police the migrants dominate the discourses (Karpenko 2004). Mukomel' (2006) sees this as resulting from Soviet experience of population control and regulation of diversity which is valued over integration.

Newcomers are also blamed for lack of emotional and social connections to place and society, and therefore held responsible for occurring social problems. The metaphor “Guest of the city” is commonly used. As Karpenko (2004) states, the “native population” of cities is depicted as host for newcomers, whose behaviour is evaluated within a category of guest. These guests are depicted as “others” regardless of their period of residence in the city, and they are continuously represented in typified and stereotypic categories of labour workers and ethnic groups (Peshkova 2008). This discursive environment keeps migrants in margins, constructs them as outsiders and subordinates them to “local culture” “local norms” (Karpenko 2004; Gdaniec 2010, 6). Hutchings and Tolz (2012) trace this practice of depicting non-Russian ethnic groups as visitors back to the Soviet institutionalization of ethnicity and its connection to titular homelands.

Migrants' legal status that is related to registration system is another important feature of migrant talk. Migrants' illegal residence in Russia is always treated as a problem that needs to be taken care of by increasing regulation and tightening legislation, “civilizing” migration (Berg-

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<sup>20</sup> However, the role of self-defined ethnicity in this context should not be overemphasised, for many citizens of the former Soviet Union, having lived in Russian cities tend to understand themselves as “Soviet citizens” rather than in ethnic terms (Voronkov 2002, 42).

Nordlie et.al 2010). Illegal migration is often connected to themes of corruption, low moral status of employers hiring illegal workers, spread of infections such as tuberculosis and HIV and organized crime. Mukomel' (2005, 85) calls this phenomenon convergence, which repeatedly connects migrants with negative issues and qualities and naturalises the connections in the mind of readers. Furthermore, Media creates a myth about economic and labour migrants causing harm to the local economy by creating competition (Berg-Nordlie et al 2010) even though more detailed research on economy has revealed that representatives of different ethnic groups do profitable business over ethnic borders (Brednikova & Pachenkov 1999, 8).

Other characteristics of migrant talk are exaggeration of numbers, metaphors of masses, use of biological markers for describing ethnicity (e.g. hot Caucasian blood), and geographical determination of culture (people of mountains being different than people of marine environment, people of hot or cold climate) (Mukomel 2005; Karpenko 2004; Shnirelman 2009). Furthermore, migrant talk related to nationalistic questions and interethnic tensions at times relates to European experience when warning about the negative outcomes of xenophobic attitudes that are interpreted as consequential to the presence of migrants (Verkhovsky 2009; Hutchings and Tolz 2012).

Despite the discourse on migrants turning out rather stable and stereotypic, Berg-Nordlie et al (2010) point out an important issue about the impact of political and economical processes in newspaper writing: issues such as changes in immigration policies, ethnically defined conflicts or increasing numbers of migrants cause qualitative peaks in migrant-related news, and change the tone of texts. Economic progress and related demand for labour migration resulted in more positive writing about migrants and labour markets, whereas economic downturn led to more critical attitudes and relative growth of news related to illegal migration and its negative side effects, health concerns and competition (ibid.).

### **2.6.2 Possession of a resource – plurality in discourses**

Simultaneously with the predominance of racialized discourse, Russian state and media promote and reproduce symbolic multi-ethnicity in Russia. According to Malakhov and Osipov (2006, 505), these policies are legitimated by “improvement of inter-ethnic relations”, which includes security issues and promotion of culture and language. In the use of official language, these policies are referred to as “ethno-cultural development”, “prevention of conflicts”, counteraction to extremism, and since 2000, “promotion of tolerance” (ibid; Karpenko 2014). Furthermore, despite the official attempt to construct Russian nationalism around the concept of

*rossianin*<sup>21</sup> (citizen of Russia), *russskii* (Russian) has become more popular and gained more attention in the political discourse demanding privileges and coherence for *russskii*, forming a majority in the country (Berg-Nordlie et al 2010).

Malakhov and Osipov (2006) write that the government, academics and official representatives of ethnic diasporas<sup>22</sup> reproduce a common discourse that represents the society as a community of ethnic groups, while the discussion escapes pragmatic questions by replacing them with abstract ideological ideas of multiculturalism. Gdaniec (2010) is in the same lines telling that the gap between rhetoric embracing cultural diversity as cultural capital and everyday experience of exclusion and xenophobia is growing. When analysing a regional, public project *Tolerantnost*<sup>23</sup> Karpenko (2014) points out to the fact, that the promotion of intercultural harmony does not actually help in promotion of diversity or fighting racism, because it takes essential cultural differences between ethnic groups and naturalisation of certain social orders of these groups as a starting point. However, the ethnically defined discourse of migration is the dominating one, while diversity is given a rather superficial position in the society.

Promotion of multicultural society has contradictory tendencies. The second war in Chechnya was named as a war against terrorism, and was followed by representations and construction of Chechens as enemies in the political discourse and media (Petersson 2008). This resulted in reassertion of xenophobic attitudes toward the “other south”, which stands against an idea to form a tolerant, multicultural citizenship in Russia (Clowes 2011, 162). Shnirelman (2009, 127), in turn notices that the idea cultural pluralism is weakly developed due to a strong tendency to favor civilizational approach in explaining cultural relations in post-Soviet Russia. The civilizational approach represents Russia as a unique cultural entity, within which the whole Russia’s population should be included as a single, cohesive cultural unit significantly different from, and conflicting with other civilizations.

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<sup>21</sup>In the 1990s the new government started promoting inclusive, multiethnic civic patriotism (Berg-Nordlie et al 2010, 2). A new concept of *rossianin* (citizen of Russia) was introduced as making difference to ethnic definition of *russskii* (Russian, officially elaborated as being a category of identity and culture, not biological category). In relation to migrants and minorities, *rossianin* has largely remained an administrative category. In public discourse the official status of citizenship is often outplayed by ethnic qualities, thus equally signifying Chechens (Russian citizens) and people from Central Asia as migrants or visitors.

<sup>22</sup> Established diaspora groups are national and ethnic associations that have very little to do with recently arrived labour workers (Voronkov and Oswald 1998, 18-20).

<sup>23</sup> Tolerance, “programme for harmonization for intercultural, interethnic, and inter-confessional relations, education of tolerant culture in St. Petersburg” is a third of its kind. It is a programme of local government, which aims at reducing racism and promotion of multiculturalism. <http://spbtolerance.ru/archives/category/news> The first two programmes of Tolerance hold a central position in my analysis of newspaper texts.

### **3. Approaches to informed reading and methodology**

This dissertation places itself in constructivist tradition where the interest lies in understanding processes that produce social reality (Häkli 1995). The study is concerned with social production of St. Petersburg as a city where migrant workers live, thus studying the intersection of social construction of otherness, and social construction of space and place in newspaper articles. Central focus of the work is on description and production of meaning in media representations, while the role of representations in the wider context of interethnic relations, local identity and so forth is not studied. The dissertation is also closely related to structuralist approach to media texts with its interest in analysing signification systems in production of meanings (Mills 1985).

St. Petersburg is understood as place that is produced in media through territorial and symbolic shaping. The first approach focuses on territorial shaping of locality (Paasi 2001a) in media representations of space. Territorially defined identities form the basis for drawing borders for and within the locality by defining boundaries between ‘us’ and ‘others’. Second approach, symbolic shaping of locality, is a way to approach the production meanings through signification systems particular for the locale - spatial symbolism of everyday life, naming, and literary texts, and how they are associated with specific events and location in the news (see Förnäs 2006, 209). Territorial and symbolic shaping constructs St. Petersburg as a unique entity, particular place with its particular characteristics for the newspaper readers.

#### **3.1. Representation of space and media spaces**

In this study space is understood as a social construction, being both an outcome of social relations and a characteristic that is creating those relations (Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1982). Physical space, people and their social action construct meaningful places, which are constantly created and re-created in the process of appropriation meanings to places (Orallena-Rojas & Swearingen 2000; pp. 85-85). The places where global processes, various cultures, identities, historical narratives and expectations of future meet, are specific to the time of description and include a particular set of meanings and images (Massey 2005; Buchanan 2009). To study the appropriation of space is to study topology and processes of construction of these spaces, to ask

how these places are constructed in the newspapers, and what kind of processes legitimise the existence and nature of the places.

Socially constructed space is first and foremost a social space, the analysis of which is also analysis of social relations (Lefebvre 1991; Gottdiener 1985, 1995). When a place is named in everyday or newspaper discourse, the aim is to locate an event in a particular spatial and cultural context, to write not only about social, but also spatial practice. The naming and framing of place corresponds to a particular use of that space (Lefebvre 1991 16), and opens up possibilities to analyse how symbolic meanings, expert knowledge or specific practical actions attached to the place are used to articulate a preferred use of the place<sup>24</sup>.

### **3.1.1 Representations of spatial practice and lived space**

Representations of space and the relation of representation to what it represents is approached from Lefebvre's three-fold understanding of social space, which serves to separate different but interconnected levels of interaction between the space and social actors. According to Lefebvre (1991), social space consists of a conceptual triad that separates spatial practice, representational spaces and representations of space. Firstly, spatial practice is associated with perceived space, daily routine and material urban reality that simultaneously separates and connects the places that are reserved for private life<sup>25</sup>. Individual travels across urban space intersect in certain locations and enable interaction and encounters between people whose lives would otherwise remain separate.

Secondly, representational, lived spaces are those that are lived and experienced through texts, images and symbols. These places dominate imagination and symbols covering the physical city and structures, and work in intentions and purely descriptive representations. Elements from representational space add symbolic and aesthetic value and connotations for experience, functioning as a cultural lens through which reality is interpreted without an intention to change it. Moreover, representational places are cohesive for those sharing a same cultural background with its symbolic order and codes used for interpreting it.

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<sup>24</sup> See for example Joenniemi 2003 and 2007 about renaming St. Petersburg after the dissolution of Soviet Union. Changing the name is also about changing the symbols of the space, employment of a different set of narratives that define what are used to define the characteristics of localities.

<sup>25</sup> This thesis is primarily concerned with public social spaces, which can be understood as spaces that give support and setting to public life (Salovaara-Moring 2006, 110), belong to everyone, and are accessible for all (Dijkstra 2000). In reality the accessibility of public spaces is constrained by multiple factors, of which I am mainly interested in those that become articulated in relation to migrants and their presence in the public space. Private spaces, often connected with home and leisure, being personal and contrasted with anonymous public world (Andersson, 2006), are discussed to the extent they are brought up and debated in the analysed newspaper articles.



Thirdly, representations of space are conceptualised spaces, where perceptual spaces and lived experience are conceived to verbal signs (Lefebvre 1991). This space occupies a dominant position in societies, for it is the space for planners and other actors producing opinions and representations about what is and what should be going on. Newspapers, for instance, produce representations of space when articulating for or against change in social environment or discussing social relations and problems related to them (see Paasi 2001b, Finney and Robinson 2008). Representations of place offer material for examining ideal versions of spatial order and legitimation of the preferred or predominating order that is described, for they reflect constructed social and political classification and are arenas for symbolic struggles where space is produced (Salovaara-Moring 2006). From the methodological point of view, all the newspaper texts describing space are representations of space, the analysis of which is also analysis of how spatial practice, knowledge of the space or symbols and stereotypes are used in these representations.

Representations of space are related to rationalisation of space, motivations to organise everyday life and make it more effective (Miller 2005). Differences and diversity are organised in representations of place to planned or 'known' systems, where difference is accepted in prefabricated forms, as induced difference (Charnok and Ribera-Fumaz).

Traditionally it is the state and the powerful of the society who are thought to have the ability to produce representations of space, engineer the society and thus interfere social relations, but representations can also be manifested in counter-discourses and media texts (see *ibid.* Charnok and Ribera-Fumaz 2011). Representations of space in media are not instrumental in their intentions to alter the social reality by materialisation of the representations. Instead of subordinating society through direct domination, media operates within rather free environment. The power of media representations lies in hegemony that naturalises and makes represented worldviews and spatial order pervasive for audiences through willing acceptance rather than crude domination (Burgess 1985, 198).

### **3.1.2 Media spaces**

“Events take place but often the geography in the news remains an unquestioned backcloth to those events. A film shots establish location; a few sentences in a newspaper report place and occasionally explain the news. Nevertheless these references are important since the majority pass into our taken-for-granted understanding of the world” (Burgess, 1985, 192).

Mass media have had a remarkable impact on perception of time and space since their emergence, but they remain relatively unstudied by geographers (Burgess 1985; Stöber 2006, 29; Salovaara-Moring 2006). In the world increasingly characterized as being dominated by flows,

media still produces representations that are framed locally and situated in specific social, historical and geographical contexts, creating spatial mediations of physical surroundings and social constructions the hierarchies and symbolism of which it shapes for the audience (Salovaara-Moring 2006; Buchanan 2009; Gasher 2009). Furthermore, media texts afford meanings to places in their representations, because public discussion relies on a commonly shared background and meanings against which the news is represented (Finney & Robinson 2008).

Local newspapers play a significant role in appropriation and interpretation of the meanings of social reality. They actively work in creation of local identity through their construction of place, and representation of imagined community it claims to be part of (Anderson 2007; Finney and Robinson 2008, 399). Communal cohesion, place-based identity and their active production are especially important for local press, which in market economies needs a sufficient base of readers who associate themselves with the locality and its community in question. However, according to Relph (1976), media's tendency to reproduce and define stereotypic images and expectations of places does not reinforce local identities, but consequently suppress other dynamic variations of place-based identities.

Press shape conceptions of physical, economic, political and social environments, and defines who belongs to the community, and thus participates in production and transformation of ideologies (Burgess 1985; 194; Allan 1999, 172; Finney and Robinson 2008). Burgess and Gold (1984, 4) state that where national press uses external stereotypes as the framework for the news, the local residents' image acts as the major framework for local press reports. This being, the study of local newspapers makes local actors and their (assumed and represented) perception of the place with its internal dynamics, margins and others, central. However, I argue that the local focus does not exclude the presence of international scale or use of external stereotypes, but, using narratives meaningful for locals, localises them on the scale of the city, thus making the external stereotypes a marginalised part of local reality or positioning the locality in relation to them.

Regional identity that is produced, reproduced and represented in media is a social fact than can generate action that shape socio-spatial consciousness and "reproduce structures of domination and legitimation" (Paasi 2001b, 139). The press is not a neutral arena for discussion. Furthermore, the journalist and editor are not alone in its articulations and representations of space and its identity, but give voice to multiple (chosen) actors that have a variety of goals and agendas they pursue in the public media arena. As Paasi (2001b, 139) puts it, "[d]iscourses of regional identity in the media [...] are manifestations of power that social actors use for different purposes, mainly by organizing spatial practices and meanings associated with space". Furthermore, when talking about the Russian context, the media has to take into account also the government's official

discourse on the issues concerned, and balance in the interplay between the official discourses and expectations of the audience (Hutchings and Tolz 2012).

What kinds of spaces do the media produce? Burgess and Gold (1984, 9-10) emphasize a distinction between place images and place stereotypes. In their conception the images are “constructed essentially from first-hand experience”, whereas stereotypes are simplified generalizations about peoples and places, “which carry within them explicit and implicit assumptions about characteristics and behaviour”. They argue that media has a tendency to create and maintain stereotypes, because they “create a vast cultural matrix in which images can develop and persist irrespective of the reality they are supposed to represent<sup>26</sup>”. According to Relph (1976, 58) media produce mass identities of places that “are assigned by ‘opinion-makers’, provided ready-made for the people, disseminated through the mass-media and especially by advertising.” According to this understanding, the identities that mass media provide are simplified and selective, “places beyond the realm of immediate experience of the audience, and hence tend to fabricate a pseudo-world of pseudo-places” (ibid.).

Newspapers can also produce places as myths. According to Burgess (1985), the form of myth is empty, and it “denies any reality to the places and people being written about (223)”, and consequently can be ignored as unreal. The ability of a myth to persist even though it signifies nothing stems from its structure as a second order signifier: myth consists of material that already has signifying consciousness so that “one can reason about them while discounting their substance” (Barthes 1989, 110). In other words, myth takes signifiers/recognisable ideological domains as its material and uses them to communicate something else, thus emptying its material from the original content. That is why myth is never defined through its object of the message, but by its intentionality, how it transmits its message (Burgess 1985; Barthes 1989).

Regardless of the media image’s authenticity, the local press has an option to represent the locality as a diverse one, emphasize an inclusive and multicultural definition of locality. As Finney and Robinson (2008) have indicated in relation to discussing asylum seekers in local English newspapers, the choice to promote exclusive or inclusive, xenophobic or open versions of local identities depends on the strategies of papers in question. While all the versions rely on stereotypes and rely on ready-made images of locality in their representations of place, the stereotypic character/form of the media space does not predetermine the resulting image of locality. However, what I think is crucial in terms of the character of mediated space is whether it tells about

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<sup>26</sup> This notion is valid against the background of previous studies of migrant discourse in press, which in the Russian context seem to be characterized by racial stereotypes and articulations of multiculturalism that are very far from actual problems that people face in their everyday life (e.g. Mukomel’ 2005).

the place and space itself for the sake of the place itself, or whether it uses the spatial imaginary merely for communicating other purposes.

### **3.2 Territorial shaping of locality - Identity of place and its borders**

Interaction between people and place creates sense and identity of place, which includes individual and commonly shared meanings that are attached to those places (Orellena-Rojas & Swearingen 200). Moreover, according to Paasi (2001a), identity of region consists of those elements that can be used to separate the region from other regions by drawing borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’.

For geographers the question of regional identity or identity of a place has been central since the times of regional geography that emphasized primordial understanding of regions that gain their personality in relation with people who live in harmony and unity with the place<sup>27</sup> (Paasi 2003). Later, humanistic and social geographers have been active in emphasizing a spatially sensitive approach to identity (see for example Tuan 1996; Relph 1976). Relph (1976) names the static physical setting, activities and meanings as the basic and interwoven components of identity of place. The meanings are rooted in the physical setting, but belong to social interaction, intentions and experience. These intentions form expectations about the space that is individually perceived and interpreted, but simultaneously shared in common understanding of symbols and cultural codes, forming a common ground for shared identity of a place (ibid.). Also Rabzhaeva and Semenov (2003, 88) write that a regional city identity is a complex set of shared experiences that structure and “normalises social practices, traditions and values”. They hold that to gain identity, it is necessary for the city to “go through certain experiences and, at minimum, comprehend its own (city) history and connect it with the history of the region, the county, and the world” (ibid). In this reading the identity of a place cannot exist separately from an individual or community, thus being related to people who interpret their environment and its codes in a culturally shared manner.

Increasing labour migration is also changing the social reality in the receiving location and leading to re-evaluation of the city identity against the increasing diversity. As Morley (2000) puts it, the ways to define identities in post-modernity are no longer articulated solely “though the traditional terminology of place-based belonging”. Instead, daily life is constructed though and in the details of people’s everyday lives, “in which the idea of home is remapped by migrants, so that it no longer represents simply one particular place (43)”. The analysis provides a lengthy discussion about how migrants and signs of their presence become part of mediated social space in the articles,

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<sup>27</sup> Even though the primordial understanding of regions is no longer relevant as an epistemological starting point, the notion is central for methodology in recognizing primordial tendencies of representations of space in newspapers.

what kinds of elements of city identity are generated in these contexts, and what is the role of migrants in them.

### **3.2.1 Identity of place and local identity**

For studying spatial imaginary, Paasi (2001a, 2001b) suggests an analytical differentiation between identity of region and regional (or local) identity of people. Identity of region can be produced and represented rather independently from the residents' regional identities (e.g. regional branding for investors or tourists), while regional identity refers to territorial consciousness of the community (ibid). Representations of local identity in media are tools of categorisation that are used for differentiating one region, place or community from another (Paasi 2001b). In local press the local resident's image works as a framework for the news (Burgess and Gold 1985), which leads to representation of locality in a way that enables the audience relate to it (or at least does not directly contradict with the audience's local identity). These narratives of locality include both narratives about the place, and implications about normative local identities, the ways in which the community should relate to the places.

Relph theorises identification of communities with places. The common idea of a city can be understood as a public identity, which according to Relph (1976, 58) "...is that which is common to the various communities of knowledge in a particular society, and comprises the more or less agreed on physical features and other verifiable components of places". Furthermore, he continues that "the relationship between community and place is indeed a very powerful one, in which each reinforces the identity of the other, and in which the landscape is very much an expression of communally held beliefs and values and of interpersonal involvements."

Relph (1976) also talks about mass identities of place that are dominated by simplified stereotypic images of place and created by opinion-makers in the sphere of advertising and mass media. According to Relph, these identities are most superficial, and exclude possibilities of empathetic and existential insideness, feelings of belonging with places. Here Relph approaches the ideas of city-branding, which employs selected elements of historical narratives and current reality in order to represent a city, region or country in a desired way, as a product for certain audiences (see for instance Tyler 2008, 78; Mukhtar-Landgren 2008; Joenniemi and Morozov 2003; Joenniemi 2007; Andersson 2006).

Identity of region/city is understood as a constructed and contextually employed set of narratives (Paasi 2001a; 2001b), which means that identities appear on multiple scales, are multiple, contested and constantly evolving according to the specific regional identity and intentions of the

speaker (see Relph 1976; Hellberg-Hirn 2003). Public narratives about regions and places participate in symbolic forming of the place by attaching particular meanings to them and their relation to the communities.

### **3.2.2 Other side of identity: borders of locality, marginality**

As put by Gottdiener (1985, 123) space “not only represents the location where events take place, but also signifies the social permission to engage in these events”, which is a central notion for the analysis of spatial representation of migrants and the appropriation of urban space for different actors.

Press representations on one hand describe the normative right to inhabit the city for different actors, and on the other participate in their creation of the norms through framing and selection of news. Through employment of public narratives of regional or city identity, regions and localities represented in media become mediums of power that can be used for shaping and classifying social processes (Paasi 2001b, 139). Identity of a city is thus central for creating and legitimating inclusion and exclusion, borders of the very locality within the city (by asking who is local) and its position within other cities. As Yuval-Davis (2007, referred in Paasi 2001b, 139) writes, “borders and boundaries, identities and difference construct and determine to a large extent the space of agency and the mode of participation in which we act as citizens in the multi-layered polities to which we belong”.

I employ the concept of margin as a spatial metaphor for borders that are being defined in the process of identity construction<sup>28</sup>. In the unicultural notion of marginality there is one dominant culture with its normative centre, surrounded by cultural periphery, the margins. Margins are defined as being the edge of the dominant culture (Kharlamov, 2012). Idea about a culture or identity as defined through opposing the characters of ‘us and them’ and social exclusion based on cultural or ethnic factors (see for instance Morley 2000) fits within this notion of marginality. The margins, located in the cultural periphery, are inhabited by the others, excluded, whose otherness works as a motivation for maintaining the borders (ibid. 141).

There is also a possibility for employing a polycultural definition of marginality, which “implies the existence of a boundary zone between cultural worlds” (Kharlamov 2012, 623). These margins, located in the cross-section of different cultures, are inhabited by cultural hybrids, who are part of more than one culture that prevail simultaneously. If identity and borders are understood as different sides of the same coin (Paasi 2001a; Paasi 2001b), the spatial identity and

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<sup>28</sup> In this context I’m talking about marginality in relation to culture. I do not attempt to engage economic or other approaches to marginality in this discussion.

margins may be different sides of the same topic. Definition of identities in relation to others and drawing borders between them does not necessarily need to take the form of exclusion (from the single normative centre), but can also happen in the context of multiple, overlapping cultures where borders form margins not outside the cultures, but to the places where they overlap, thus enabling people to inhabit two cultures instead of being excluded from the single one. These different views become visible for instance in struggles over urban policies about the future development of the city, which in Petersburg manifest themselves in discussions about development of the historical city centre, a place representing and embedding the very identity of St. Petersburg for many city dwellers and visitors (Yurchak 2011).

### **3.3 Symbolic shaping - St. Petersburg and the specific readings of locality**

“The city, being the place where different national, social and stylistic codes and texts confront each other, is the place of hybridization, recordings, semiotic translations, all of which makes it into a powerful generator of new information. These confrontations work diachronically as well as synchronically: Architectural ensembles, city rituals and ceremonies, the very plan of the city, the street names and thousands of other left-overs from past ages act as code programmes constantly renewing the text of the past. The city is a mechanism, forever recreating its past, which the can be synchronically juxtaposed with the present” (Lotman 1990, 194-195)

“By the sheer number of texts, codes, connections, associations, by the size of its cultural memory build up over the historically tiny period of its existence, Petersburg can rightly be considered to be unique, a place where semiotic models were embodied in architectural and geographical reality” (Lotman 1990, 202).

Cities as everyday environments are full of semiotic mediation structures: Past manifests itself in the physical texture of the city and in the way people and media adopt and adapt stories about the space. New meanings become contrasted with the past and negotiated between different readings of the city and predictions about its future, transforming the physical infrastructure into meaningful or stereotypic places. Also in mediated place identities media text represents a location and associates it with historical, cultural and social meanings that are used to make sense of reality, articulate and interpret cultural difference (Fornäs 2006, 209).

According to Paasi (2001a; 2001b), symbols have a remarkable role in shaping regions, as material for constructing identity narratives. Names of city and streets, labels put on landscapes, monuments as symbols of collective memory, monumental buildings, rituals and

cultural products participate in creation of regional consciousness and can be transformed into selective heritage and public narratives about the place for different audiences (ibid.).

St. Petersburg has both an advantage and burden to be attributed with strong symbolic tradition and images that make the city particular and affect the ways in which people inhabiting and visiting the city understand, set expectations and talk about the city (Hellberg-Hirn 2003; Goscilo 2008; Rabzhaeva & Semenov 2003). While the narratives can rightly be argued to give Petersburg an important part of its character, St. Petersburg's association with its specific identities is so strong, that some critics are "predisposed to speak not of Petersburg, but of its myth" (Goscilo 2008, 60). The myth is born in an intertextual process where representations of locality in a number of literary works, so called 'Petersburg Text', about the city and city identities are tied together by a system of references (see Miller 2005) and sematic unity (Könönen 2003). In the traditional approach the particularity of Petersburg focuses on its apocalyptic beauty, struggles against nature and power, and the rich, multicultural and international cultural heritage the city carries (see e.g. Hellberg-hirn 2003; Goscilo 2008).

Petersburg's remarkable literary tradition and extensive mythology have been, and are still are forming the idea of the city (Lotman 1990; Buckler 2005, 5). Metaphors about "Dostoyevsky's" or "Pushkin's" Petersburg, the eternal or doomed city live in everyday language are central for articulating the identity of city and its citizens (Buckler 2005; Hellberg-Hirn 2003), while the city seeks to restore its status and character and consolidate the imperial and Soviet pasts with present, the European character with Russian. The representations of Petersburg keep having impact on the development of physical infrastructure and its use. The connection between the literary corpus and the topography of the city is a strong one, thus contributing to the understanding that the historical memory and heritage are embedded in the physical infrastructure of the city (Könönen 2003).

However, despite numerous narratives about Petersburg, (including those related to the Soviet Leningrad), the Petersburg Text has a tendency to govern the interpretations that are available for St. Petersburg identity. The text works a master-narrative with a particular structure, aim and sematic unity that influences and directs the discourses and interpretation of St. Petersburg's objects architecture, art, streets, canals and parks (Joenniemi 2003; Könönen M. 2003). These interpretations, being embedded in buildings and monuments, set constraints for new openings and influence on how the stories about the city are being told (Joenniemi 2003) and further, what kind of inclusive and exclusive ideas of locality are available.

Furthermore, Petersburg Text and mythology of position the city in between Russian and European spaces. The dual position of Petersburg as part of its identity is apparent in this



Turoma's (2007, 213) interpretation of Lotman's analysis: "[T]heatricity and artificiality, contained in the very idea of the city's founding, are related to the way the Petersburg identity is formed; it is always dependent on the subject's awareness of an outsider's gaze, "the gaze from Europe' or 'the gaze from Russia' (= 'gaze from Moscow')". Petersburg identity construction is compressed between the requirements set for cultural capital of Russia, and the role as the most European city in Russia.

### **3.3.1 Identity of the city –geographical landmarks and symbols of St. Petersburg**

Identity of place includes the physical infrastructure, people's actions and a symbolic level (Relph 1976). Identities of Petersburg are to a great extent embedded in the physical texture of the city through the St. Petersburg Text (Könönen 2003). Being so central for the consensus identity and image of the city, the physical environment and especially the historical centre has become an important topic of discussion that shows diversity under the seemingly unified understanding of the city identity, the nature and future of which is negotiated when the physical infrastructure of the city is being adapted and developed to the needs and wishes of today's social and economic conditions<sup>29</sup>. Changes in the built environment in the city centre has become a major source of public discontent also due to the great value people give to the architecture as a carrier of historical heritage that makes Petersburg a significant place for many its inhabitants (Trumbull 2011; Yurchak 2011). Many locals find the new development threatening to not only the physical centre, but also for the identity of the whole city (Yurchak, 2011). Struggles over the urban aesthetics and further identity of St. Petersburg go beyond urban development, becoming struggles over who has the power to define what is the essence of St. Petersburg, and owns the city and determines its future. In Lefebvre's (1996) terms, the talk goes about right to the city, which refers to citizen's right to access the decisions that produce urban space, and defining the patterns of inhabiting space, living in it (Dixon 2010, 37; Kalandides & Vaïou, 2012).

The physical environment has also been granted a remarkable role in the birth of what I call a myth of a "Petersburger" (Kagan 1996), one of the representations of locals also in the analysed newspapers. In accordance, Slavina (2001, 81) writes about the built environment that

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<sup>29</sup> Since the early 1990s Petersburg has been through a radical social restructuring due to price liberalization and privatization. Foreign direct investments have grown rapidly, and flourishing real estate markets increased the property prices (ibid.). The government seeks to scale Petersburg as a major world city, while many of the inhabitants feel alienated from the development of the city, which has failed to recognize the needs of its inhabitants while focusing on commercial development and construction of high-scale housing. Science, technology, construction and culture have been the pillars on which the new vision of the city have been built since the early 2000s, while the residential needs and basic infrastructure of the city have been neglected (Trumbull 2011).

plays a remarkable role in the system of St. Petersburg's culture and especially in its accumulation: "To be a Petersburger is not something that can be inherited by birth", as the city formulates its people to its own character. As Hellberg-Hirn (2003) writes, Petersburger is an embodiment "of the noble humanitarian spirit of the city", an idealized version of the realisation of the city for its residents, which draws from the mythologies that surround the city and the physical environment romanticized in them. I understand the construction of this stereotype of Petersburger as a determinist process, where the physical environment is granted a position of defining the one and only version of accepted locality. Petersburger as a mythical category is homogenous in how it relates to the place and carries the meanings of the place as a part of its identity<sup>30</sup>.

### 3.3.2 Public narratives about the identity of St. Petersburg

The identity of St. Petersburg is understood not as a stable and unified image of the city, but as a set of more or less stable narratives that are recognized as being particular and significant for the city. Hellberg-Hirn (2003, 262) calls the image, symbolic landscape of St. Petersburg an archipelago that includes fragments from imperial Petersburg, Leningrad and other points of reference. Elements of these narratives are employed contextually in different discourses (Paasi 2003, 477).

Imperial Petersburg is a reference point that is often brought up when St. Petersburg tries to reinvent its identity after its long period as Leningrad. Imperial Petersburg is often seen as city that successfully combined and mixed Russian cultural patterns with foreign ones, and where foreigners formed a remarkable part of the population (Hellberg-Hirn 2003). The urban and cosmopolitan image of imperial capital hides within it the imperial cultural hierarchies (2.5), which were constructed around imperial self and others. Imperial culture, promoted powerful social groups, "*is a cultural construct that aspires to purity and homogeneity, an ideological parallel to the famous – although false – harmony of the imperial city*" (Hellberg-Hirn 2003 ,87).

The heritage of imperial Petersburg is related also to a more recent invention of tradition. Cultural capital is a status claimed by Petersburg in relation to rest of Russia and, in some contexts, Europe. As a discourse it relates to the cultural capital that is understood to embody in Petersburg Text, in local urban traditions and cultural institutions (Hellberg-Hirn 2003, 242-244).

Despite the fact that the Soviet narratives and experiences in Leningrad are often devaluated in favour of imperial stories (Hellberg-Hirn 2003; Simmons 2008), the period of

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<sup>30</sup> In addition to the 'cosmopolitan' explanation of the birth of mythical Peterburger, it could be noted that urbanisation in imperial Russia in the 19th century marked a remarkable Russification of population in growing cities (Kraiser 1994), which might have contributed to the idea of St. Petersburg as creating its own "local" population.

Leningrad created a particular identity<sup>31</sup>, which remains important for the older generation of Petersburg's Leningraders. The memories of the Siege and Soviet internationalism are represented in the newspaper articles despite the neglect of this narrative in the official versions of Petersburg identity. Even though the signification system of Soviet period has been replaced by re-naming the city and the streets, memories of Soviet experience still exist and connect with the cityscape.

Despite its association with strong regional character and identity, St. Petersburg is not a closed system of significations, but exists with its population on multiple spatial and temporal scales. The case study recognizes that national identity is embedded in variations of the identity of St. Petersburg. In the newspaper articles elements of national identity are localized (Petersburg as a Russian city, equation of national and regional), but also contested or contrasted with particularities of regional St. Petersburg identity (Petersburg as the Russian other). Petersburg's role as the multicultural imperial capital and birthplace of modern Russian culture (Hellberg-Hirn 2003) forms a strong contrast with Soviet politics of territorial institutionalisation of ethnicity (e.g. Brubaker 1994), association of Russia as a national homeland for Russians, and Petersburg as a Russian, also characterised as a xenophobic city.

Each of these scales includes their own version of ethnic plurality in the city, which further are employed in the current, strongly racialised discourse on migrants in St. Petersburg that will be discussed further. Each of these scales imagines a different set of communities, whose encounters and struggles over the right to determine the material and symbolic order of the city creates a specific version of locality.

### **3.4 Discourse analysis, semiotics, and methodological tools**

The purpose of this study is not to test any particular theories, but use different, theoretically informed approaches to analyse media-produced image and spatial imaginary of St. Petersburg in the talk about migrants, and the ways in which the imaginary is produced. Discourse analysis in this study is conceptualised as a study of language use that analyses the ways of constructing social reality in different contexts (Suoninen 1999). Discourses, then, are the available and applicable sets of interpretation repertoire (Jokinen & Juhila 1999) that reflect the power

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<sup>31</sup> The symbolism of the imperial St. Petersburg was replaced with Soviet signs and attributes that created Leningrad as the "cradle of three revolutions" and after the WW II "the city of heroes". The new time and name were accompanied with new identity, and the socialist urbanisation started taking place in the form of socialization of private property and allocation of residential space into communal apartments. (Trumbull 2011; Hellberg-Hirn 2003). Leningrad identity developed as a counter force for imperial St. Petersburg, while the artistic life, even though politically and socially suppressed, continued to realize the tradition of resistance in the spirit of intellectual St. Petersburg (Rabzgaeva and Semenko 2003) that currently seems to work as reference point for the city as Cultural Capital.

relations in a society. The research problem is formulated as a study of cultural continuity in a sense, that it is interested in the role of local identity, mainly in the form of rather established identity narratives, in the production of local reality. Narratives about St. Petersburg and migrants, and their contextual employment are understood as discourses that have gained rather ontological status as established ways of speaking (ibid). The study is analytical rather than critical, and thus focuses on the ways rather than motivation of language use.

Furthermore, in order to study the discourses, I approach the texts from a sematic, rather structuralising perspective where I understand social reality as a system of signs and their representations (Gottdiener 2005, 4). Social reality as a system of signs refers both to the signs that people use, create and interpret in their everyday lives, and to wider sematic structures where a whole city and its elements are part of a particular signification structure (3.3). Newspapers represent this social reality, systems of signs in their news and features through selection and interpretation, and thus participate in reproduction of the social reality. Further, the newspaper texts as the object of my analysis are semiotic structures in themselves, and can be analysed using the concepts and tools for studying signs and significations. With the newspapers, I am thus dealing with signification systems on two levels: texts as representation and text as the research object in itself.

However, it is crucial not to mix the levels. Sign systems of social reality form a cultural background that gains its significance only when it is contextually employed in the media (see Jokinen and Juhila 1999, 61). For instance, reference to St. Petersburg's ability turn everyone into Petersburgers can appear as a part of both inclusive and exclusive discourses, depending on how it is used. In fact, prior knowledge about the social world is required only when analysing the role of cultural continuities and their representation in the press or understanding specific spatial imaginary in the respective cultural context, whereas descriptions of spatial imaginary and linguistic technics for its production can be done purely within the sematic system of the newspaper text.

In the previous sections (Chapter 2, 3) I have provided a brief overview on what I think is important for contextualising the media representations of space into the social world, how media representations of place are constructed in relation to the reality they are constructing and, recognising the representations that are potentially significant in terms of construction of local identity and imaginary in the press. I have also discussed theoretically informed approaches for studying processes that draw from both the semiotic levels. The next sections will further introduce tool used for intra-textual analysis of the newspapers.

### **3.4.1 Reading the newspapers: interpreting the landscape of mediated St. Petersburg**

I understand newspaper representations as consisting of four levels:

1. The city as a physical infrastructure with its actors
2. Frames for the interpretation (current understanding about the city, locality and migrants; and what are the proper, acceptable representations, discourses available, editorial policies)
3. Previous texts about the city
4. The final account of the symbolic/spatial landscape

This analytical frame is adapted from semiotic interpretation of landscapes (Tarasti 1990, 162). The city as a physical infrastructure is the base not yet interpreted by the journalist. The second level is the cultural lens that both guides the perception of the author, and reflects the interpretative frames, narratives available for describing the city at the given moment. This is a central level for analysing “cultural continuum”, the impact of rather established ideas of local identities in the imaginary of St. Petersburg. Furthermore, the discourses used in newspaper articles define how the city and its relation to different actors will look like. I presume that the existing, rather established discourse on migrants and narratives of St. Petersburg, the interpretation of which is guided by the St. Petersburg Text (this chapter 3.3) have at least some impact on the way news are constructed. The impact of editorial policies on the newspaper articles and journalist’s personal attitudes, even though not being the object of this study, also influences the resulting texts. On the third level I recognize that newspapers take into account and write in relation to other texts in newspapers and elsewhere, and employ previous representations of places and actors as conventional ways of speaking. The fourth level of analysis is the final text in the newspaper.

### **3.4.2 Culture as signification system: Creation of spatial difference in representations of perceived space**

In cultural semiotics cultures are understood as signification systems, and members of those cultures belong to communities of codes (Gottdiener 1995). Differences between meanings are understood as cultural differences that become articulated on the textual level, and social communities are understood as communities of codes (Gripsrud 2006, 21). Code links the content with expression and signifies, gives meanings to signs according to rules that are specific for the code in question (Könönen, 2003, 23). Shared understanding of this code between the sender and recipient is a prerequisite for communication.

According to Tarasti (1992, 8), encounters of different cultures are a natural situation for asking what are the codes and signification systems used in a particular culture. Individuals and groups mark territory with signifiers that reflect their own meaningful narratives of space and thus create visual, auditory or abstract signs and urban writing through which space acquires symbolic value (Lefebvre 1991, 141; Gottdiener and Hutchingson 2011, 93).

Understanding and recognising the code requires knowledge of conventional meanings and facts in the culture that is studied (Gripsrud 2006, 19). Furthermore, Alasuutari (1994, 98) writes, that the analysis employs researchers' prior understandings and knowledge of the culture. Qualitative analysis cannot therefore escape the researcher's subjectivity in terms of understanding cultural differences and ability to estrange oneself from the research. In the context of studying representations of otherness in the newspapers, it is the journalist who has interpreted and represented the cultural difference, thus making the journalist's understanding of codes and their contextual employment and modification the actual object of study.

Newspapers articles actively transform connotative meanings by changing the use and immediate function of a phatic sign to a socially sustained one (the concepts introduced in Gottdiener 1995, 174) and representing the sign, visible or audible *parole* in a new context and discourse thus introducing new meanings for the sign and new readings of the space. These signs can vary from reinterpretation of landscapes in selling destinations for tourist catalogues to contextualising phatic signs, "artefacts of ordinary social interaction" (Krase 2011, 372), into a new signification system.

### 3.4.3 The newspapers and articles

Two local newspapers were chosen for this case study. *Komsomol'skaia Pravda in St. Petersburg* (hereafter *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*) is a regional edition of national *Komsomol'skaia Pravda*, which is the leading national newspaper in national readership (Pietiläinen et.al, 2010, 43). It is "popular in cities and towns, among the middle-aged, the poor and low-level professionals" (ibid.). The second paper is *Sankt Peterburgskie Vedomosti* (*Vedomosti*), also a local edition of national paper. *Vedomosti* is a business daily with audience targeting the higher-level professionals. According to the paper's official website (*Vedomosti* 2014), its' circulation is 11 500. The papers were chosen in order to gain the widest possible social spectrum of the readers. By focusing on the width of social representativeness instead of maximising the numbers of readership I tried to get access to spatial imaginary of local population as a whole instead of focusing on a certain social class.

The time frame of collecting the material is 1.1.2010-30.9.2011, starting point being a chronological continuum to earlier studies that discussed migrants in the Russian media. The analysis ends in September 2011, when the forthcoming parliamentary elections sharpened the argumentation in newspaper writing. Also the political standing of the newspapers became more evident with the proceeding elections. The initial search was done on general principle at the database Integrum. The query was done using word search with terms migrant (*migrant*), guest worker (*gastarbayer*), “friendship of nations (*druzhba narodov*)”, xenophobia (*ksenofobiia*), diaspora, Caucasian (*Kavkaztsev*), southerner (*yuzhane*) and arrival (*priezzhie*)<sup>32</sup>. The terms were chosen on the basis of previous research on media discourse on migrants (see chapter 3), primary searches with words “migrant and guest worker” and finding related expressions from the texts.

The number of search results was reduced by excluding articles that were not relevant for the locality (e.g. articles concerned news from abroad, other Russian regions, Russia as a whole, tourism, or certain minority or expat groups that were not discussed in relation to labour migrants). The final number of analysed articles was 73, of which 30 from Komsomol'skaia Pravda and 43 from Vedomosti. Having employing Anssi Paasi's (2002, 146) concepts of identity and region in the context of city, the chosen articles reflected either the identity of the region (those elements of nature, culture and regional life that are used to distinguish a region from other regions) or regional identity (the regional consciousness of individuals) of the reader community, or contained a detailed and socially meaningful description of the local landscape or place. The choice of articles was further informed by previous research about St. Petersburg text and identity, the semiotic studies about the city, the history of the city and multiculturalism in Russia.

The general principle in choosing the articles and attempt to create an overall picture about how St. Petersburg is constructed in newspaper writing of migrants resulted in some analytical obstacles that had to be overcome in the analysis. Firstly, the number of analysed articles was rather big for conducting interpretative analysis that can do more than merely describe the spatial imaginary and actors' role in it. Secondly, the data set was extremely diverse. How to analyse a very diverse data set where the role of migrants varies from the main topic of the article to a small reference to presence of guest worker? The role of the city varied from location to action to a symbolic reference point and even an actor. From the point of research question, all the cases might tell equally much about how the locality is understood in relation to migrants, but the diversity of texts made the classification and representation of the texts rather difficult.

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<sup>32</sup> The terms were searched with the variations of inflection in Russian language (i.e. singular, plural, genitive, the dative).

The analysis does not systematically trace who is speaking, or attempt to compare the two newspapers, as the purpose is to study the overall spatial imaginary in the print press. However, it should be noted that personal styles of journalists, different editorial policies and who is given a voice in the articles may create a bias in the research material if the results are tried to generalise to talk about Petersburg as whole. Also the two papers had certain differing preferences on topic coverage, which was left out of the scope of analysis.

My own ability to interpret the textual meanings and understand the codes as a non-native Russian speaker can be critically evaluated firstly due to the language barrier, and secondly because of my own position as an outsider to St. Petersburg. However, having spent two years in the city and observing the city life in its streets has equipped me with a spatial imaginary of my own, which at least unconsciously has guided and illustrated my reading of the media texts.

All the translations in analysis are mine.



## 4. Analysis

The analysis is divided in three main sections. The first two parts are mainly descriptive, familiarizing the reader with the various ways in which St. Petersburg and its places are represented in the newspapers. The description and organisation of it is a result of topical classification and coding, and includes a primary level of analysis: pointing out the dominant narratives, their contexts and contextual adaptation, textual convergence of migrants with their spaces, tendencies to attach certain qualities to certain places, and the tight control that is represented as necessary measure in managing difference. The third part formulates a synthesis of the descriptive sections by bringing together different levels of spatial representation, and places the research material to the previously discussed theoretical-methodological considerations of locality. The synthesis draws a picture of St. Petersburg as it is presented to the local population when talking about labour migrants. The picture shows how the prevalent discourses on migrants and St. Petersburg draw a map of normative locality with its centre, borders and margins; how the narratives are reduced to myths and thus emptied from significance; and how the space outside the myths looks like.

For analytical purposes I have created separate sections for discussing the research material in relation to how St. Petersburg is represented in the articles. The chapter 4.1 discusses the city as a specific symbolic place, which is in the news constructed as a location, explanation and part of social phenomena (location for discussion about what is known about social phenomena related to migrants, feature articles), whereas the city as a setting for everyday life action (location for reported face-to-face encounters) is discussed in the chapter 4.2. On the both levels I found that narratives of city identities and stereotypes related to the actors are employed contextually to transform the city from objective infrastructure or economic and administrative unit into a meaningful place, where certain types of the representations of city and the actors' position in it appear legitimate. Meanings attached to representations of the city and the subjects of the news are understood as reflecting ideological practices that justify, naturalize and legitimise the positions that are given to migrant workers and locals in the context of St. Petersburg (the concept of hegemony according to Gramsci in: Burgess 1985). The sections are not mutually exclusive, and at times some quotes from the material may include both perceived and symbolic dimension of space. The decisions made for the current classification depends on which one of the dimensions I wanted to elaborate.

## **4.1. Production of tolerant Petersburg**

“Petersburg – a city for tolerant people?

As is known, from the very first days of its existence, Petersburg was the city of the most different nationalities, languages and cultures. When Aleksandr Dyuma, after having seen numerous countries and cities came to Petersburg and walked on Nevskiy, he was impressed by the casually and unusually peacefully coexisting churches of different confessions. A French writer named Petersburg “a city of religious tolerance” in his letter. Much water has flowed since then, what is the situation now? Can Petersburg be understood as a city of tolerance and religious freedom?” (Khudyakov and Dazhunts, KP 30.6.2011).

This quote never answered the question it posed, but continued with descriptions of numerous hardships that ‘illegal’ migrants are bringing to the city. The press actively expressed its concern about negative impact of migration, and discussed possible and already existing solutions to “migration problem”, which was first of all constructed as a problem for the city, with few exceptions discussing the problems migrants might be facing. I begin the analysis with description of the need to consolidate inter-ethnic relations in the city in the light of growing number of migrants called into question historical narratives of multicultural and tolerant city. A government-led programme of Tolerance, established in order to solve inter-ethnic problems in the city, became a central concept in the discourse of migrant workers.

### **4.1.1 Tolerant space as a counter-reaction to “capital of extremism”**

One of the central problems of migration in the press was its perceived connection with worsening inter-ethnic relations. Extremism, being an expression of violent form of nationalism had given the city a stigma:

“Some years ago, Petersburg was named 'the extremist' capital of Russia. The unflattering epithet the city received in relation to a series of crimes targeting representatives of non-native nationalities” (Razgonov 2010, KP 22.04.2010)

This stigma was a regular topic in the press, and the growing number of labour migrants was keeping the theme actual.

In parallel, newspapers also wrote about a UNESCO prize for tolerance that was granted for Petersburg for advancing tolerant values through education and lowering inter-ethnic tensions. This prize was connected with city authorities attempt to “fight against extremism”, lower crime rates, decrease inter-ethnic tensions and promote tolerant ideas to the city-dwellers, within a

framework of a programme *Tolerantnost*<sup>33</sup> (ibid.; Suris 2010; Rutman 2010a; Rabkovskiy 2010a). Komsomol'skaia Pravda reported on the world-scale significance of the programme:

«France, Norway, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, Austria and Latvia have already applied the Petersburg practice of tolerant education in poly-ethnic, multi-confessional society. And the model is also popular in Russia: On the orders of President Dmitry Medvedev the Petersburg model will be spread also to other regions.» (Khudyakov & Dazhunts 2011 in KP 30.6.2011 , ).

The UNESCO prize was titled as a sign of programme's success, and was represented an issue of proud for Petersburg (see ibid, Suris 2010a in KP 27.1.2010; Yermakov 2010c in KP 20.10.2010). This prize came to form grounds on which Petersburg set itself to the vanguard of tolerant ideas not only in relation to the rest of the Russia, but also in comparison to Europe. In the press this programme was constructed as internationally recognised consolidation for the unpleasant reputation of the city.

Many articles stress that the growing proportion of non-Russians in the city is leading to a need to “harmonize inter-ethnic relation”. This indexical<sup>34</sup> relationship between migrants and resulting instability is taken for granted and repeated in various contexts of talking about popularity of extremist ideologies and rising number of migrant workers (Khudyakov and Dazhunts 2011 in KP 30.6.2011; Grigoryev 2011 in KP 16.12.2011; Sherek 2010b, Vedomosti 8.10.2010). The programme Tolerance itself is represented as a series of action that prepare young Petersburgers for the arrival of migrants via education, while articles that are more oriented toward threat of extremism tend to emphasize the achievements of law enforcement agencies in arresting leaders of violent nationalist organizations (Rutman 2010a, Vedomosti 12.1.2010).

The two papers had very different approaches for the programme Tolerance, and while critically discussing the need for tolerant education for the citizens, they also expressed their understanding of the tolerant character of the city: Discussion on the programme Tolerance called for question reader's and authors' expressions of their identification with the city as a carrier of Imperial and Soviet diversity, which was then compared with ideas of ‘European tolerance’.

Articles in Komsomol'skaia Pravda take a positive standing towards the issue, representing opinions that admit the need of moral education of Petersburgers. The talk about migrants, extremism and tolerance brought about narratives from Soviet Leningrad, where the

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<sup>33</sup> Programme for Tolerant Education of Petersburgers, hereafter programme ‘Tolerance’ or ‘Tolerantnost’.

<sup>34</sup> Index is understood in Peircian sense as an unmotivated sign, which is “established as a sign in the mind of the interpretant through experience or pragmatic understanding of material world”, for instance lightning -> thunder (Gottdiener 1955, 12).

trauma of the siege seems to dominate the imagination<sup>35</sup>: “*Unfortunately in Petersburg, in the city which survived the fascist siege, the residents still have to face radical right-wing street propaganda.*”(Razgonov 2010). Also in the next quote the paper uses the Soviet history as an ideal but lost model for questions about diversity:

«I would not have guessed that I, a Leningrad-time teacher will give lessons of tolerance. [...] As soon as children from Central Asia first appeared at my class, I noticed how national attitudes hardened. [...] There is really a need to start talking and talking about evils of xenophobia for current Petersburgers from the very childhood” (Yermakov 2010c in KP 30.10.2010 ).

Many articles state that children and young people are at the greatest risk to be provoked by the presence of migrants and their foreign habits, for they lack the Soviet experience of brotherhood of nations. Lack of tolerance was externalised from the major population (audience of the newspapers) to young people and specific extremist groups, whereas “[t]he older generation has received ‘the Soviet vaccination’: brotherhood of nations, internationalism.” (Shmel’ 2011, KP 27.6.2011). Furthermore, direct scaling to the siege of Leningrad was done in order to show the absurdity of current situation in the interviews: the survival against the Nazis in the Second World War was elaborated as a milestone after which Petersburg should never face extreme nationalism again. Further, tolerant residents of Leningrad are contrasted with the current “Petersburgers”.

In turn, Vedomosti is more sceptical about the government programme and argues that the focus of the programme Tolerance is wrong. This quote brings together many ideas that are repeated in the papers:

“St. Petersburg officials have missed some obvious things. First of all, most of us are children of the Soviet era and the spirit of internationalism is not strange to us. Besides St. Petersburg itself from the first years of existence demonstrated exceptional tolerance of other religions and foreigners. All chronicles of the city tell about entwining fates about the Northern Capital and migrants: starting with a native of Moscow’s Peter I to German Ekaterina II, [...] from Swiss Trezzini to Odessan Akhmatova. You can name thousands of people who have long ago become symbols of Petersburg, even though they have not been born here» (Sherik 2010b in Vedomosti 8.10.2010).

First the journalist denies the need to educate people by referring to Soviet history. Unlike in the case from Komsomol’skaia Pravda, the Soviet ideas of internationalism are not ideal models from the past, but an ideology that is still in force. Secondly, he denies the whole idea about Petersburg as a city in need for tolerant education: Petersburg is represented as city that in essence and by historical fact embraces difference or assimilates people.

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<sup>35</sup> This might also be an indicator about the reader-base of the papers: A remarkable part of Komsomol’skaya Pravda’s audience belong to the older generation.

I read this as a syntagmatic condition where labour migrants, Tsars and respected artist are treated as equal elements of paradigm<sup>36</sup>, and St. Petersburg is represented as a melting pot (syntagm) that creates its own population (literary character, embodiment of the humanitarian character of Imperial Petersburg, discussed in chapter) in a determinist manner, while the ancestral roots and social class of population are completely insignificant<sup>37</sup> (Table 1). Syntagm results from a use of conventional rule that combines elements from different paradigms. Here the conventional rule, a code recognised by readers, represents the state of things in the Melting Pot Petersburg, and contextually allow representation of a very unlikely selection of elements of paradigm. Leningrad, in turn is a city where the respect for siege as a common trauma should be realised as an absence of extremism, and the Soviet ideas of internationalism consolidate interethnic relations. However, unlike in the case of St. Petersburg as a melting pot, the Leningrad as a consolidator of ethnic relations is not eternal, but related and limited to Leningraders identity, people who have lived through the experience.

| <b>Syntagm (identity of the city)</b>                      | <b>Rule (relationship between the city and residents)</b>  | <b>Elements of paradigm (actors included within the identity)</b> |
|--|--|---|
| Melting pot<br>Petersburg/Cosmopolitan<br>imperial capital | The city understood as a creating its own population, primordial understanding of belonging to the place. The city is eternal, replacing the populations' need for ancestral belonging | Peter I, Ekaterina II, Trezzini, Akhmatova, labour migrants       |
| Leningrad  | Friendship of nations, the siege as common experience uniting people with the tolerant city  | Leningraders  |

**Table 1 Representation of St. Petersburg as a tolerant city**

<sup>36</sup> Paradigm is a "set of signs, any of which are conceivably interchangeable within a given context" (Thwaites et al 1994, 39)

<sup>37</sup> However, some other articles employing the same syntagm of Melting Pot Petersburg have set the adoption of Russian language or Orthodox religion as a minimum condition for the newcomers (see e.g. Elisyeva, 2011 in Vedomosti 1.3.2011; Sunyagin 2010 in Vedomosti 27.4.2010).

Other critiques of the Programme Tolerance locate Petersburg into analogue with European countries. On one hand, Petersburg is located in the same position with the Europe and shares the threat of social instability that took place in France and Germany in 2010. On the other hand, Petersburg is represented as a carrier of specific and multinational history. Restoring the old values is seen as a way to avoid the European situation, worst-case scenario that results from liberal policies toward cultural tolerance and religious freedom: *"Europe has repeatedly showed us where inordinate play with tolerance can lead"* (Rutman 2010d in Vedomosti 4.8.2010)

Some authors assume that social instability rises from ethnic enclaves, so called outlaw "mini-states". Petersburg as a European city faces the same threats with France and other "fully respectable countries" (Ibid.). Scaling Petersburg with Europe is a common way to criticize the ideas of tolerance together with reproducing the image of inherently multicultural Petersburg. The next quote is an expert opinion that was published in Vedomosti. The author is a professor in the faculty of philology at St. Petersburg State University.

"When we speak that our city has to become 'a city of European culture', we should not forget that this European culture is by no means perfect. Mostly, the problems occur in national-racial aspects of life [...]. Can we assume that these evils will simply pass over us? 'Yes', someone will say, because Petersburg was always multinational. No doubt about that. But the dominant interests of the city always were the interests of Russian culture, the basis of which was the Russian Orthodoxy as a state religion, determining the place of foreigners in the city." (Sunyagin 2010 in Vedomosti 27.4.2010)

Here Petersburg is constructed as a Russian city, and the desired European culture is represented in a negative light. Historical Petersburg is constructed as a multicultural and ideal place, and return to the dominance of Russian and Orthodox values is presented as a solution to restore the harmony of past times. The opinion does not follow the general line of the paper, while it addresses the religion, not the city itself as the quality that consolidated inter-ethnic relations in the city. Further, the author's idea about diversity or tolerance is not that of free expression of foreign values, but tight control.

In the next quote historical qualities, namely the freedom of religion as representing the ideas of tolerance, are attached to the physical infrastructure of the city centre. This symbolism is represented as a proof of tolerance without any indication about whether or not those places have any functional or symbolic value to the communities practising the named confessions. The semiotic models embedded in the architecture of the city (see Lotman 1990) and praised within the literary tradition about the city are employed as such in the newspaper:

“Let’s keep in mind that churches of different confessions, dating back to the previous centuries stand peacefully on the Nevskiy<sup>38</sup> even today. And yet one more inescapable fact: The Great Mosque, built in the early XX century, standing at the best place of the city, with the highest minarets in the whole Europe. The aura of religious tolerance has not gone anywhere from Petersburg: hostility based on religion is not present in our city.” (Elisyeva 2011 in Vedomosti 1.3.2011)

In order to continue the tradition of passing the identity of tolerant St. Petersburg to the future generations in the physical form and cement the tolerant image over Petersburg, the city also decided to erect of monument for it:

“How the first monument for tolerance will look like will be decided in a creative competition, which will be organized at the Saint Petersburg State University of Architecture and Construction.” (Tufanova 2010 in Vedomosti 29.6.2010)

It seems that discursive production of Petersburg as a multi-ethnic space employs historical narratives and myths about Petersburg as a cosmopolitan melting pot of nations in Russian Empire and the Soviet Leningrad as a symbol of friendship of nations and victory over Nazis. The articles contextualise the city as a symbolic unit, while the geographical and administrative borders are less significant. This approach evokes identities of imperial Petersburg and Leningrad in relation to city’s European and Russian identities. On one hand, Petersburg is European in a sense that it shares the threat of non-European migration and instability and at times becomes articulated as a city of European values, while on the other hand it is anti-European with the legacy of dominating Russian Orthodoxy, Soviet experiences and resulting unique standing toward multiculturalism or tolerance. The power of historical Petersburg is embedded in symbols of the city that include milestones of religious freedom (e.g. The Great Mosque) and people who symbolise the city despite being newcomers themselves (for instance Anna Akhmatova, or paradoxically even the founder of the city, Peter the Great). Physical space becomes an important barer of symbolic tolerance, as a continuum from the Tsarist times.

The table 2 summarises how actors and their relation to the city are represented in the context of counter-balancing the negative reputation of Petersburg as a hostile city. The role of migrants is only intermediate: they are mentioned as provocateurs of interethnic tensions. Locals, here understood as the “responsible readers” (extremists and the youth excluded), are held as carriers of the city’s tolerant aura, and responsible for passing the tolerance to the children and nationalists. The relation between the city and its residents is deterministic: over time the city has managed to assimilate everyone to one multicultural, albeit sometimes Russian-dominated notion of

locality, and it should do so in the future. In addition to assimilation, the city has created tolerant citizens. The representations of ideal city created a historical Petersburg (with imperial and Soviet characters), which does not move toward the European liberal attitudes of diversity.

| <b>City as a symbolic place contested - Imposed identity (extremist capital)</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Role of migrants   | Symbolic: as socio-cultural category they symbolize cultural incompetence of young Petersburgers and extreme nationalists |
| Role of locals   | Responsible for maintain the symbolic order   |
| The city's relation to its residents   | Deterministic: city creates its citizens, socializes them   |
| Ideal space  | Historically defined Russian city   |

**Table 2: City as a symbolic place, defensive representation**

#### **4.1.2 Representations of locality in construction of tolerant labour migrants**

“-Petersburg is the fourth Rome, announced Diakon Kuraev, and set an order to solve the problem with migrants. – The city has, as always in its history, a big mission of re-educating its guest workers coming forth. If Petersburg does not succeed in adapting migrants to the matrix of European culture and Russian soul, the mission is impossible for the whole Russia, and we will be doomed like the first Rome.”(Sevostyanova 2011b in KP 9.9.2011)

The fourth Rome is a symbolic name for Petersburg in the context of Petersburg text (see Lotman 1990, 1993-194). In relation to Petersburg the Rome has a dual meaning as a city of glory and destruction. Now this attribute is employed to signify the task of Petersburg as a melting pot, the city's ability to turn everyone to acculturated Petersburgers. In relation to the rest of Russia and even Moscow, Petersburg is held responsible for the faith of the county that depends on the city's ability to convert migrants to the ideas of “European culture and Russian soul” (defend the empire from barbarians). Into what kind of city are the migrants to adapt?

Despite multiple critics, the programme Tolerance was treated also as a successful project in the newspapers. As a response to the notorious reputation as a violent and racist city, Petersburg was constructed as inherently multicultural. However, the perceived problems with multiculturalism did not end, and the city authorities decided to create follow-up programme with a new focus that echoed the critics presented in Vedomosti (see also Rabkovskiy 2010a in Vedomosti



3.3.2010): *"The committee of internal relations announced: [Programme Tolerantnost' 2.0.] is oriented to social adaptation of labour migrants to the sphere of Petersburg. In other words, now also the foreigners will learn the local culture."* (Yermakov, A 2010c KP 29.10.2010).

*"Integration of migrants has to be a two-way process"* (Rabkovskiy 2010b in Vedomosti 24.9.2010; Tochka nevozvrata 2010 in Vedomosti 2.12.2010) is a phrase often used in relation the programme Tolerance 2. However, instead of finding a common ground for mutual understanding, the phrase was always accompanied with an elaboration of migrants' unwillingness to adapt, while the other way of the track is simply ignored on the basis of Petersburg being already tolerant. It is common for the press to name reasons why the successful adaptation of migrants is currently failing. Even though some articles addressed migrants' poor living conditions and long working days as a reason for their inability to get involved in the cultural life of the city and learn the language (Yermakov 2010c, KP 29.10.2010), the explanations for perceived problems with the migrants were more often sought from the very qualities that were imposed on migrants. On one hand migrants are said to lack interest in "our culture" and language, and on the other on ethnic differences, which are articulated in a primordial manner. The changing character of migration is noted (from European to labour migration from Central Asia) and environmental determinism and civilizational views are employed in order to show essential differences between the new migrants and the locals (e.g. Glezerov 2011, Vedomosti 27.9.2011). St. Petersburg is represented as a city of high cultural standards, which are threatened by the uncivilized guest workers.

The contradiction about Petersburg's historical ability to turn people to Petersburgers and perceived problems with the economic migrants is discussed in the next example. Current situation is contrasted with historical experience, which was characterised by harmonious coexistence of various groups under the dominance of Russian culture and Orthodox religion. The author directly engages with Huntington's ideas about clash of civilizations by stating how European example shows too much tolerance, and loss of Russian principles leads to "war between civilizations". The former tolerance does not fit with the current situation:

"The current migration in Petersburg looks different. Its European composition is not so remarkable. Instead Asian, southern character, as is said, cannot be ignored. It is proved that our climate does not really fit the residents of warmer countries - many labour migrants come here to work only for three months. But however long they might stay, for them and for us would be better if these people immediately knew that the rules of behaviour and norms in our society have to be followed." (Eliseyeva 2011 in Vedomosti 1.3.2011)

The civilizational understanding of ethnicity is rather prominent in the newspapers. Petersburg is aligned with European civilisation, whereas “Southern” migrants both in what is called Europe and Petersburg are understood to be inherently and biologically different and therefore being unable to adapt.

Newspapers give a rather vague image about what is meant by adaptation. On one hand the papers report on the events and courses that are organised within the framework of Tolerance 2.0.: Courses of Russian language and local Petersburg history and culture. The goal of the programme is articulated in a rather normative and symbolic manner: “*Methods of the new programme helps remarkably to socialize the behaviour of new residents, in a manner that they would not go against the traditions of the European city*» (Rabkovskiy 2010a in Vedomosti 24.9.2010). The talk also goes about easing “*the process of adaptation of migrants into the sociocultural sphere of St. Petersburg*” by “*increasing the level of personal culture and developing social educational systems.*” (Khudyakov and Dazhunts 2011 in KP 30.6.2011). Furthermore the adaptation and assimilation is planned advance by drawing tolerant cartoons, creating a movie forum, and establishing museum programmes (Rabkovskiy 2010b in Vedomosti 26.9.2010). On the other hand, also separate reports on migrant’s problem suggest that the newcomers should strive for adaptation to vague categories such as ethno-cultural sphere of Petersburg, Petersburg life (Gurov 2010 in KP1.11.2010) its norms, rights, manners and etiquette (Tufanova 2010, Vedomosti 29.6.2010). Vedomosti reported on a charity organisation that arranged a museum visit in Hermitage for the guest workers so that they could relate to the cultural life of the city, and see things other than leafs, snow and dirt on the streets. Vedomosti also introduced a newspaper that is published in Petersburg Turan, aimed for helping Central-Asian guest workers in practical issued is told to contain an important section that «tells about the culture of the Northern Capital, its traditions, outstanding people, interesting facts of the city's history, where people from more than hundred nationalities live” (Migrantam est’... 2011 in Vedomosti 9.3.2011). Some articles also connect the high migrant representation in the criminal statistics with migrants’ poor knowledge of local manners (Rabkovskii 2010b in Vedomosti 25.8.2010 ; Nazarova 2010a in Vedomosti 6.8.2010)

The articles do not explicitly indicate what is meant by ethno-cultural sphere or etiquette, but the cultural emphasis of the programme Tolerance and circumspect use of wordings imply, that the greatest shortcoming of migrants is their lack of understanding of social norms (manners), and furthermore, inability to participate in the discourse about the great history and culture of the city. In other words, migrants do not know how to communicate through shared

cultural categories, they are not familiar with the cultural symbolism, the code and signification systems of the city.

The importance of participation into the cultural discourse of the city can be also approach from another side: a quote from an article discussing an event taking place within the programme Tolerance 2 praises the migrants who enrich the cultural life of Petersburg by participating in cultural festivities: *“With our efforts in the life of our city an old Russian saying can be changed: ‘Where you were born, there you are useful’ has [in Petersburg] become ‘Where you work, there you are useful’”* (Eliseyeva 2010 in Vedomosti 30.8.2010).

Articulations and accusations about cultural incompetence of labour workers went also further, stating that the migrants were actually challenging the local culture. It was commonly said, that for migrants the city is not a monument of culture, but only a place for making money in ethnic clans. Rather than showing respect to the local culture, the migrants ignore it and choose to marginalize the heritage and replace it with their own collective, domestic habits, as is expressed in the next quote:

”The surrounding city sphere is in no way a monument of culture for them. Instead, it is only a place for survival and earning. In order to survive, they established a row of self-constructed structures, half-legal clans on big markets and pure mafia groups. This being, the person coming for us, let's say from the remote Caucasian of Central Asian village, does not feel himself abandoned, because he is supported by his (unfortunately often criminal) religious brothers and countrymen”.(Sunyagin 2010 in Vedomosti 27.4.2010)

This description constructs the migrants as forming ethnic enclaves, the “mini states”, and localize them to markets, that become attributed with ethnic and criminal connotations. These ethnic spaces are articulated as a basis that enables the migrants to resist adaptation and stick to their own transnational and even criminal networks instead of deeply living in a city that is turned to a museum (Ibid.; Vishnevskiy 2010 in Vedomosti 19.11.2010; Kessenikh 2010b in 24.11.2010). Transnational places the migrants are claimed to form are seen as a threat to the law and order of the city.

While the representations of St. Petersburg as tolerant, anti-xenophobic city foregrounds specific historical narratives and relates Petersburg with Europe in a highly critical way, the city into which migrants should be adapted appears very European, therefore forming a contrast to the “Asian” migrants. Instead of talking about specific places and stories about the city, the press creates images of city where the main requirement of adaptation is ability to interpret and communicate through shared cultural categories, to understand the city as a place with unique standards and etiquette, as a monument of culture rather than a setting for everyday life and material

survival. The city is represented as a set of cultural norms that the migrants fail to meet, consequently contributing to increased ethnic tensions.

#### **4.1.3 What kinds of citizens for the tolerant Petersburg?**

Discussion about tolerant values and the resulting articulation of St. Petersburg as a city defined by its high culture offers material for analysing how people, both locals and migrants, should live in the city where labour workers were desired to adapt within the programme Tolerance. The argumentation reveals ideal versions of the city's future, and often expresses a gap between the desired state of locality and the actual life in the city. Interestingly, migrants are involved in the discourse as reference points for the locals, who are equally criticized for lacking the needed cultural capital that the tolerant Petersburg requires from its citizens.

"We, the city dwellers, are complaining that newcomers do not always relate to Petersburg correctly and respectfully. Do we always relate to it correctly and respectfully?" (Morozova 2010b in KP 14.1.2010)

In this context the city obligates people to behave according to certain principles. Often it is especially the migrants that are seen as a cultural threat, who endanger right ways of speaking (poor language skills, accent, and use of wrong dialect) and fail to appreciate the city as a historical monument. However, this context takes into account also the locals' struggles to fulfil the city's standards, as the following example about architecture shows:

"The anecdotic building was not designed by a guest worker from a distant South, foreign to the city, as could be imagined from the first sight. It was also not designed by any novice architect trying to please the customer in everything. No, in the lead of the creative collective stood a member of city planning Association of Saint Petersburg, an experienced architect [...].(Sherikh 2010a in Vedomosti 26.3.2010)

Concerns about the city losing its character along people's ignorance was also reflected in features on city committee's publication "A textbook of the national language of Petersburg". In Komsomol'skaia Pravda's interview a representative of committee worries about the state of Cultural Capital:

"Of course St. Petersburg fosters the status of Cultural Capital, but when it comes to the level of culture in everyday behaviour... Here everything is much more complicated [...]. Our programme introduces a series of suitable anti-crisis educational acts. 'The ABC' is one of them. Assumedly, the book helps to cultivate guest workers to the extent that they can start to behave in more civilized ways."

"'The ABC' can be interesting not only for migrants, but also for tourists, students and even native Petersburgers – it does tell about corners where a resident of city centre never put his foot on. It is not a secret that the inhabitants of suburban Piter

coming to the cultural promenade, closer to the museums say: ‘we came to the city.’” (Livsi 2011 in KP 21.1.2011).

The way to present “native Petersburgers” together with students, tourists and migrants is interesting: The article makes a point in showing that Petersburg in a cultural sense, as a city-museum does not equal to the city in which many Petersburgers actually live.

These cases mediate some degree of resistance to the sharp division of “locals” and “migrants” that was observed earlier, as the same standards for following the set social norms are set for the migrants and locals. This version of city identity (syntagm, Table 3), constructed of elements available for St. Petersburg as a cultural capital, expresses the idea of melting pot Petersburg, but is more flexible in a sense that its rule includes an option for change for the very idea of the city along the change of its people (loss of the status of cultural capital). However, the change is articulated as a threat, not a chance.

| Syntagm (identity of the city) | Rule (relationship between the city and residents)   | Elements of paradigm (actors included within the identity) |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Cultural Capital               | The city of high cultural standards, outstanding in Russian context, city as an image of its residents and residents as an image of the city | Locals, labour migrants.                                   |

**Table 3: Representation of St. Petersburg as a cultural capital**

The papers were not completely univocal in accepting the idea of St. Petersburg in the terms defined by promoters of culturally prestigious, mythical city. At times the position of ordinary resident is also taken into account and promoted as a proper form of locality and life in St. Petersburg. In an article “*Debutant insists to correct price-tags at markets*” (Gribov, A. 2011 in KP 16.2.2011) published in Komsomol’skaia Pravda, a politician requires the public space of the city cleaned from incorrect grammar, spelling and pronunciation:

“Literacy rate in the city is in a steep fall –Elena complains. –And it is visible in the price tags, heard in marshrutki<sup>39</sup> - we have no reason to be proud.” The debutant suggests a solution: “To TV we need educational programmes, to public transportation, metro and busses – small posters that tell how to correctly say this or that phrase. On the level of society we must not reconcile ourselves to the illiteracy of newcomers. [...] We have to teach them, she elaborated, -not giggle, make a point, and ask to correct the prices. To say that there is no word ‘*etsa*’ in the Russian language. Instead we have a word ‘*yaitso*’ (egg). (Gribov 2011 in KP 16.2.2011)

The politician in question did not earn the sympathies of the journalist, but was instead marked as estranged from normal people who would be more concerned about the numbers

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<sup>39</sup> Commercial mini busses

than spelling on prices tags. Interestingly, the article depicted migrants in rather positive light by implying that another initiative of the politician, concerning proper dress code for “guests of the city” walking on the city centre “in bathrobes and tubeteikas”, to be a sign of debutant’s lack of tolerance toward other cultures and newcomers.

The example indicates that the paper can take a relaxed standing in relation to overly strict and conservative views. Further, the article aligns readers to a group for whom the markets are places of everyday life, not inaccessible due to their ‘ethnic’ meanings, who do not mind the diversity of urban signs and languages on markets and streets (see also Mavliyev 2011a in KP 16.3.2011), whereas the politician is depicted as somewhat narrow-minded. The desire to create physical manifestations of correct grammar to the public places of the city is further explained as compensation to the Petersburgers’ declined eagerness to “read classics”.

In 4.1.2 and 4.1.3 I discussed situations when migrants’ cultural incompetence was constructed as a threat to the city. Table 4 summarises how this context represents the actors and their relation to St. Petersburg. Descriptions about migrants’ linguistic shortcomings or ignorance to local culture articulated toward the need to assimilate labour migrants to St. Petersburg, and object of adaptation was also the main role given for migrants. The concern of cultural incompetence was also expanded to the some of the locals who are claimed to lack understanding of the city. Overall, locals were however represented as being responsible for maintaining the cultural level in the city, because of the symbiotic relations between locals and the city. In this sense, anyone with adequate cultural competence in the city defined by its high cultural levels is local.

| <b>City as a symbolic place contested - Migrants’ cultural incompetence</b> |  |
|---|--|
| Role of migrants  | Objects of adaptation and assimilation (as a category are a threat to symbolic status of the city) |
| Role of locals  | Responsible for maintain the symbolic order  |
| The city’s relation to its residents  | Symbiotic: people claimed for preserving the city  |
| Ideal space   | Cultural Capital   |

**Table 4: City as a symbolic place, representation of a conserved city**

The last quote works as bridge to the next section, where the discussion focuses on how urban space becomes allocated for local and migrants in the city. The quote shows how a

culturally significant building has been reconstructed in a proper manner without losing the cultural heritage and Petersburg as a personified city takes the honour for the successful project. The achievement is articulated as being important for the city itself; the city is able to renew itself and simultaneously guard its heritage. This future also includes the presence of migrants as building and restoring the city. Nevertheless, this future sticks to an idea of separating migrants' housing from the rest of the housing sector and 'normal' public space. As a positive thing, the prejudices of surrounding inhabitants seem to be disappearing with the false fear of urban disturbance.

“The fourth attempt to open the Barracks of Kriukov after reconstruction took place successfully. [...] Petersburg showed, especially for itself, that it is possible to reconstruct old empty buildings in a manner that no architect, defender of historical city or citizen opposes. Quite the contrary: everyone is only happy that the old walls got a new life. The project is also remarkable in another sense. ‘*Intarsiia*’ turned out to be the first company in the city that honestly and openly announced: guest workers were employed in the reconstruction of the barracks, and we do not see anything criminal in that. At the Square of Labour appeared the Petersburg’s official settlement for temporary workers: a long row of two-storey clapboard huts. Residents nearby, admittedly, were a bit worried at first, but got used quickly: nobody disturbed the peace, and the sanitary norms were followed” (Orlova 2010b in Vedomosti 4.6.2010).

## **4.2 Spatial practice: common infrastructure, uncommon city and marginalisation of migrants**

Migrants are a visible part of the urban landscape: they work at the municipal services as street cleaners, they sell goods in shops and market places, as well as work at construction sites transforming the physical setting of the city and participating in the creation of modern Petersburg. Migrants reside in the city also at their leisure: spend time with families and friends, practice their religion and meet friends. Here the focus is on articles that include representations of migrants *within* the urban setting, on *intra-urban* scale. The migrants are located either in specific addresses, in public space that is defined in more general terms (e.g. central district, streets, roofs, markets etc.), or in their homes – in places where the migrants are assumed to work and live in St. Petersburg, and which they share with other city dwellers.

In this reading the city is represented as *a practical environment for everyday life* where intra-urban processes and practical organisation of everyday life in the city are of interest. Understood in Lefebvre’s (1991) terms, the articles describe perceived space that concerns material urban reality as a setting that enables individual travels across the city and encounters between people. Moreover, this space is not derived from experiences and intentions, for they too are

important in space oriented at immediate needs and practices (see Relph 1976). Despite being confronted by individuals, the individual “recognizes from the start that all other individuals have their perceptual spaces and places. Furthermore, he is aware that these constitute just part of the more or less agreed on and consistent lived – space of the entire social or cultural group of which he is a member (Ibid. 12).” The perspective of the media is interpreted as being the perspective of the reader who considers herself as a member of the local community, viewing the city from the majority culture’s point of view.

#### **4.2.1 Passing by guest workers**

The articles that describe perceived action involving migrants and in which the city is represented by its specific places and spaces localize the perceived event in detail: a wooden passage for pedestrians on a pavement nearby the metro Vladimirskaya (Ratnikov 2010b in Vedomosti 25.8.2010), market pavilions at the *Sennaya* square (Ratnikov 2011 in Vedomosti 28.3.2011), a street by a crossing «five corners» in front of a restaurant Yaposha (Bezimyannyi 2010 in Vedomosti 30.11.2010). The descriptions give an impression that the reader is well familiar with the particular places in the city. It is characteristic that the article includes a statement about why the particular place is important for the locals, or how it relates to the everyday life in the city. The function of places in question is practical, serving as a setting for everyday life action rather than being understood by its cultural signs or connotations. These articles are describing urban life and the changing physical environment in the light of perceived problems about the urban space, what it contains and how it relates to the everyday life of the residents. For example, a wooden tunnel next to scaffolding by metro Vladimirskaya is described as having been disliked by the city dwellers from the beginning:

“Not only was this structure taking the whole sidewalk on the Kuznechnoi Lane and on the Bolshaya Moskovskaya Street – it was also attracting flyers like annoying flies. On the way haircut, services of dentist and registration for migrants<sup>40</sup> were offered to you in colourful papers tens of times...”(Ratnikov 2010b in Vedomosti 25.8.2010).

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<sup>40</sup> In some cases it is not the migrants themselves but rather other signs in the urban settings that represent them. For instance, reporting on advertisements of illegal registration services for migrants indicates the newspapers’ critique for malfunctioning law enforcement practices or local people who participate in grey economies. In an article stating: “Moreover, the fictive companies are not located just anywhere, but in the very centre of St. Petersburg – on the Nevskiy, on Zagorodniy and Vladimirskiy streets.”(Grigoryev 2011 in KP 4.8.2011) The case is contextualised as a moral statement about corrupted Petersburgers who make money with registration of «possible robbers», and who are arrogant enough to advertise their criminal business in the very centre of the city; in the centre which is elevated as being not only any location in the city (about elevated significance of centre and grey economy also Yermakov 2010b in KP 25.2.2010).



Another example tells about temporary pavilions that the city administrations had failed to remove: *“They were built there for the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of St. Petersburg, and from that on they have been raising complaints among the citizens. Now, after seven years the city officials decided to listen to the opinion of the people”* (Ratnikov 2011 in Vedomosti 28.3.2011). The wording of the articles implies a contradiction between how administrators and citizens understand the ideal use of space. However, they are the only ones that are assumed to have interest on the issue, for the people who are putting the demolition into action do not count as individual participants, actors with personal connection to the setting: “Southern workers” who were taking down the pavilions could not inform the newspaper about the planned proceeding of their work, because *“they did not understand the question of our journalist”*. (Ibid.). A sarcastic report on road construction in the city centre notes, that *“Pedestrians going to work and home have in different weeks of this fall witnessed a couple of working southerners slowly shifting paving stones from here to there. It seems to be a never-ending rigmarole.”* (Bezmyannyi 2010 in Vedomosti 30.11.2010).

Likewise, a conflict over urban aesthetics and violation of the conservation norms in planning and building a glass-walled high-rise in the city centre became articulated in a similar manner. Even though the construction of prospective building was formally prohibited, the migrants arrived to the scene:

“A new year’s demarche of deconstruction workers (what could be a better time: the administrators thought no one would notice) really upset the local residents. They told about the issue to our paper. After locals’ calls the militsia<sup>41</sup> came and took guest workers away from the site for half a day. However, they were later released, and the residents of Vasily Island were warned not to call the militsia again.” (Ratnikov 2010a, Vedomosti 12.1.2010).

In the articles the result of action is depicted as significant for the users of these places: people passing by or living near. However, there is no indication about the significance of workers: they do not have any role except for putting into action someone else’s orders. Interestingly, the «Southerner» is the quality attached to the workers. This attribute seems to serve merely as a visual detail for the reader who is constructing the scene from the description. In the example about a construction site, the workers are automatically assumed to be migrants, and calling the police is described as an obvious act for removing the migrants from the scene, thus implying the illegal status the workers. Even though the workers are present in the representations, the space into which they are located does not allow communication with the people around them, and they rather take the position among elements of the changing landscape. In addition to the infrastructure,

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<sup>41</sup> Russian name for police before 2011

nature and especially climate are firmly present in these articles, whether or not they have a significant role to play in relation to the action. Workers do their job in “pouring rain”, the “streets are already covered with snow”, and on the roofs that are so hot that “you could fry an egg there”(Orlova 2010c).

The scenes described here recognize that city dwellers as actors have their own opinion on the places where the action takes place. At the same time, those with power, namely city administration and the construction companies, determine what the space contains. In turn, the role of migrant workers is instrumental: descriptions of their perceptual and lived space is absent, and they are part of observers’ perception, tools transforming the setting according to some orders that the journalist is not familiar with, but which usually include confrontation between the citizens’ and planners’ idea of the city. In a way migrants give face to the criticized authorities of city, and seem to become expressions of local people’s inability to control the use of space in their surroundings, metaphors for city dwellers’ lack of right to the city.

In the previous examples migrants and their presence as such did not threaten the symbolic order of space but were rather represented as a natural part of the changes in landscape. Even though not communicating or recognizing each other as social actors, working migrants and locals shared the same physical space, and the expressed discontent with the space was not directed to the migrants but the ones with power to control what and when the migrants are present.

The next discussion traces the borders of space where migrants are accepted in the urban space. The borders are constructed in a process of defining normative social action of migrants and locals in the public space. On one hand, as was discussed earlier, migrants can be described as impersonal actors executing orders of construction companies or municipal services who are insensitive to locals’ needs and wishes. On the other, they are workers whose right to work in the city is conditional and questioned because of their ethnic difference and socio-economic position related to the difference.

A quote from an interview published in *Komsomol’skaia pravda* shows how streets as a space of work seem to be strongly associated with migrants or lower social classes<sup>42</sup>:

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<sup>42</sup> The city administration's failures in dealing with the issue of cleaning the streets and roofs from snow and general maintenance of city infrastructure got a great deal of attention in 2010 and 2011. Many private companies were also accused for using illegal working force and neglecting safety measures. Usually the narrative goes about lack of working force and the resulting demand for quick solutions and illegal migrants. Opinions on using guest workers were negative: guest workers are uncomprehending and the quality of their work is bad. Descriptions about accidents were usually framed as warning examples about employers’ neglect of working safety or unprofessional action and ignorant behaviour of guest workers. (Alekseeva 2010 KP 9.4.2010; Krakovets 2010a KP 31.1.2010; Orlova 2010a Vedomosti 29.4.2010; Suris 2010a on KP 27.1.2010; Grigor’yev 2011 KP 4.8.2011; Senin 2010 Vedomosti 6.4.2010; Kyznetsov 2011 Vedomosti 10.2.2011) Especially in the articles of *Komsomol’skaya Pravda*, the tone was that of criticizing outsourcing the municipal services, and the negative qualities of guest workers became indicators of low morality of

“[...] Besides, I am a native of Petersburg, it is not my job to clean the streets from snow. Let others deal with it. [...] To work as a janitor is a job for outcasts or migrants.”(Morozova et al. 2010 in KP 14.1.2010)

In the quote native Petersburgers are represented as if their inherited right to reside in the city allows them to count on others in terms of unpleasant work. It seems that, in the opinion of the interviewee, Petersburgers' right to use urban space and is inherently different from the rights of “people at the bottom of social hierarchy and migrants”. Here Petersburgers are not contrasted with ethnicity, but rather with a sufficient social status as a precondition for locality<sup>43</sup>. The quote furthermore implies that presence of those who are suitable for cleaning the streets is a given fact; the migrants are already in Petersburg to do the work.

The image about streets as places for socially and economically disadvantaged migrants is specified in representations that descriptively indicate that migrants are already on those sites of potential work:

*“All our maintenance companies were forced to hire tens of people from the number of guest workers to shovel the snow and remove ice. Slaves of this kind were found and hired straight at the streets on 300-500 roubles per day - often without issuing any kind of official documents.”* (Ledovaya Likvidnost'...2010 in Vedomosti 3.3.2010) The quote emphasizes a strong association between migrants and the streets: Not only are the streets places where the migrants are used as labour, but they also are the places where the migrants, described as “slaves<sup>44</sup>”, are already waiting to be called on duty, to work within the grey sector of economy. The street here becomes a metaphorical space, which connects the street as place of work with streets as a place for living<sup>45</sup>. Another article published in Vedomosti reports about a corrupted housing company that managed to win competitive biddings but performed below the quality standards because its employees were “*guest workers taken from the street*”(Orlova 2010a in Vedomosti 29.4.2010).

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private sector. (For example: “Certain money-chasing companies recruit uncomprehending guest workers. It does not lead to anything good.” (Krakovets 2010a in KP 31.1.2010)

<sup>43</sup> It should be noted, that in the article the opinion of the ‘Petersburger’ is generalised to the whole group of locals who are attributed this stereotypical, rather undesired and snobbish attitude toward manual labour. The division is created between two groups that consist of stereotypic archetypes of “Petersburgers” and “guest workers” rather than actual people.

<sup>44</sup> This metaphor is used to indicate the low morals of private companies that provide services for the municipality and hire illegal workforce. This discourse about ills of grey economy victimizes guest workers.

<sup>45</sup> Within this discourse migrants are not the only group that are represented as having a permanent presence on the streets: depending on the context or purpose of the speaker, they are accompanied by homeless people (the city mayor's call for labour force) and people with very low social status (see for example Prishchep 2010 in KP 22.1.2010).

In the examples the migrants' presence on the streets is naturalised. On one hand migrants are described as having an evident location in the social hierarchy of Petersburg, belonging to the city as underpaid personnel, service staff for the locals. The location in social hierarchy further relates to location in the city, creating streets as symbolic places connected with migrants' socio-economic position. On the other hand, the private companies operating on maintenance of infrastructure are accused for immoral action. Unfair employment conditions of labour migrants are seen not so much as ignorance of migrants' rights, but more as evidence of companies greediness and cause of the inadequate performance in keeping the city clean.

The social context of working within which migrants are accepted in the streets does not recognise workers as having social dimensions other or outside the work and workplace. An article in Komsomol'skaia Pravda's expresses the idea as follows: "*Workers from near abroad<sup>46</sup> have hands full of work in the summer, but in the winter they sit without anything to do*" (Prishchep 2010 in KP 22.1.2010). In the article the lack of work at the construction sites becomes a natural explanation for employing Tajiks for cleaning the streets. When depicted like this, migrants are derived from private life and social significance. Instead, they are understood only as potential labour. This interpretation is somewhat challenged by a report about a museum visit that was organised for the migrant workers so, working through the year "*sweeping leaves, shovelling snow, dropping icicles from morning to the evening [...] would see something different from shovels*" (Averina 2011 in KP 29.3.2011). However, despite offering the possibility to engage with what is seen as the most important thing in locality (visiting the Hermitage), the underlying assumption is that guest workers do not have independent means for cultured leisure. Without the effort of local associations, migrants' space seems to be socially defined as place of work instead of space with cultural meanings. When talking about migrants' presence in public space it is elaborated that the city in which migrants are depicted to be living has no symbolic dimension, is not lived and saturated with cultural meanings, and gains significance only as a place for labour<sup>47</sup>.

In the texts analysed above the main critique was not targeted to the migrants themselves, but for the authorities: city administration and greedy companies. Hiring of migrants and descriptions about their machine-like working were communicated for making a point about the people who employed them. The city is represented as a practical living environment for local population, where locals are users, not maintainers of the city (Table 5).

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<sup>46</sup> Countries of the former Soviet Union

<sup>47</sup> However, a representative of Uzbek Diaspora (in Russian context diasporas are understood as associations) comments on a new dictionary of Russian sayings they published for migrants: "*If it the phrases are not needed at work, maybe then at home. Migrants also have social life.*" (Mavliyev 2011d in KP 6.7.2011)

| <b>City as a perceived space contested - Critique for authorities</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Role of migrants  | Work: they signify the cause of the problems as executors of change |
| Role of locals  | Non-labouring free users of space                                   |
| The city's relation to its residents                                  | Practical: the urban space is claimed for everyday life             |
| Ideal space   | Well-functioning city space   |

**Table 5: City as a perceived space, representation of users' vs. planner's city**

#### **4.2.2. Construction of ethnic space**

As was previously discussed, the public perception of migrants imagines them in large and unified enclaves. When discussing issues where migrants and their work are represented to communicate discontent to the other urban actors, the papers are creating places where labour migrants are reduced to the role and social position of manual labour, are continuously present and lack social life outside the context of working. However, these common urban places described above do not carry ethnic connotations, and even though migrants are represented as a unified group of non-native, socially disadvantaged workers, they cannot be said to be written into ethnic enclaves that would be marked in ethnically interpreted signs (see chapters 3.3 and 4.1). In turn, the contexts where ethnicity and ethnic stereotypes are attached to migrants and their places are found in texts where focus of the discourse changes to places where the migrants themselves are represented as causing problems for the locals and setting obstacles for their use of the urban space. In these representations migrants are not only working, but also visibly display their culture or violate legislation and norms of behaviour.

The space represented in the articles continues to be a practical living environment for the actors, but is now understood as being claimed by locals and migrants alike. Space acquires dual meaning not only by conditioning normative inclusion in terms of working, but in relation to the group that is represented as dominating, setting the norms of space. Here the talk goes about representations of spaces where migrants are not only working, but are present as representatives of their cultures, stereotypic images of those cultures and participants of illegal economies. The locals, in turn, express their discontent about the migrants' presence and actions that are seen as disturbing for everyday life in the city.

In addition to the mere presence of migrants (and attached stereotypes), they are written into spaces that are distinct from the rest of the urban space. Creation of these ethnic spaces relies on representation and interpretation of symbolic differences that mark the borders between conventional “Petersburg” space and migrants’ space (e.g. Gripsrud 2006; Krase 2011; Gottdiener & Hutchings 2011). As Gipsurd (2006) writes, differences between meanings are understood as cultural differences that are articulated on textual level, and social communities follow the patterns of perceived and depicted communities of codes. The spaces that are represented as ethnically defined are often articulated in negative terms, threatening the locals’ ability to freely use the urban space. Next I will discuss the characters of the spaces into which migrants are written.

An article in *Komsomol’skaia Pravda* (Sevost’yanova 2011a in KP 1.7.2011) offers an example of reporting on how migrants’ space is described when migrants themselves are accused of violation of legal norms, causing inconvenience for local population and threatening the security of law-abiding citizens. The report takes place at *Narodnyi Market*, which is described as a cheap place “where you can buy a dozen eggs for four roubles”, and where the police regularly raids the workers’ permits. The story focuses on reporting on the elements and structures of grey economy that seems to characterise this market. The title of the article, “*Hundreds of illegal migrants were dragged out from the People’s market*”, includes several elements that are common in the talk about migrants and their spaces. Estimated number of migrants is very big and vague, and becomes repeated several times later in the article, while the actual number of people is not known. Also, the journalist represents all the migrants as “illegals” even though she later tells how “FMS<sup>48</sup> will investigate who of them work illegally”. Informant of the article is a police officer, whose comment about regular raids on the market (*Every time we come here...*) further strengthens the connection between illegal migrants and markets as a continuous one.

The domination of illegal economy and its connection to migrants (also the word Caucasian is mentioned) in the market space is made clear from the beginning. The image of migrants’ or ethnic space is further intensified by representations of overlapping private and public space in the proximity of the workplaces: At the *Narodnyi Market* the migrants “sleep right under their counters”. *Vedomosti* (Rutman 2010b in *Vedomosti* 7.6.2010) reports that it is “well known that a mass of illegal migrants lives at the premises of a vegetable market, and *Komsomol’skaia Pravda* wrote repetadly about migrants who were found sleeping their nights in a kindergarten they had previously been renovating (Tsapu and Yermakov 2011 in KP 17.9.2011; Belova 2011 in KP 22.9.2011).

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<sup>48</sup> Federal Migration Service

Reading visual symbols is one important feature in creating ethnic places in the press. In the next example migrants are described as marking their residential space around the markets, and consequently claiming the space from the local population who is represented as marginalised, and whose private life the presence of migrants somehow disturb.

*“The newcomers live right where they work: 95 Chechnya<sup>49</sup> and other similar signs adorn the walls of the houses near the People’s Market”* (Sevost’yanova 2011a in KP 1.7.2011). Here space becomes articulated as an ethnic one by selective interpretation of phatic signs, transformation of connotations of visible objects in urban texture<sup>50</sup>. From all the possible interpretations of the sign the author has chosen to employ “95 Chechnya”, the one that is suitable for supporting her argument about the strong presence of residing and working migrants. By ignoring the variation in the signs (“and other similar writings), the journalist further homogenizes the space she describes. The chosen expression and other texts (elements of paradigm) are interpreted as signs about ethnic demarcation of ones habitat and the sematic variation in relation to other signs is ignored. Despite the fact that the houses in the proximity of the market are not the market itself, and house also people considered as locals (a local woman complaining about migrants living next door is the second informant of the article), the writing about Chechnya<sup>51</sup> is used as an indicator of ethnic domination of space, which spills over the borders of clearly defined markets and challenges the symbolic order of residential space. Within this discourse the locals are represented as excluded actors.

The negotiation of borders of ethnic space takes place also in relation to social action. In an article “Massive prayer at the Sennaya Market shocked Petersburgers” (Mavliyev 2010 in KP 10.9.2010) local people were surprised by existence of a prayer room in the neighbourhood, and the rooms’ inability to fit all the prayers and resulting transformation of public space into place of worship was represented as a major disturbance for the everyday life for locals:

“Hundreds of Muslims from Tajik diaspora celebrated Eid with a morning prayer. Residents of neighbouring houses could have only guessed about existence a prayer

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<sup>49</sup> The meaning of 95 Chechnya was not explained to the readers. From the context I interpreted that the journalist attempts to emphasize the ethnicity of people who live next to the market, but other possible meanings the number 95 are not included in the analysis.

<sup>50</sup> According to Krase (2011, 372), phatic signs are “artefacts of ordinary social interaction that become markers of settlement space. They are indicators that we are ‘at home’ in our neighbourhood. At the same time, they can be extracted from this context and rendered as representations of ethnic spaces”. Gottdiener (1995, 174) describes the process of extraction of a sign from its context as “transformation of connotation”, where immediate function of a sign is changed to a socially sustained one.

<sup>51</sup> Newspapers do not differentiate between migrants coming from territories of Russian Federation (e.g. Chechnya, Dagestan) and international migrants from other Caucasian or Central Asian countries. Paradoxically, also Russian passport holders can be labelled illegal workers and become represented in a same group with people who have overstayed their presence or failed to acquire residence permits and registration in the territories of Russian Federation.

room that was located in the courtyard. The prayer continued for three hours. By nine in the morning the yard deserted, and Petersburgers were finally able to leave their homes for work”. (Maliyev 2010 in KP 10.9.2010)

For the local residents, the room for prayer did not even exist before the morning that it was overcrowded and could not fit everyone in. This sudden emergence of religious ethnic space with “hundreds of believers” was represented in the press as “a shock”. The article implies that Petersburgers were completely excluded from the urban space during the prayer, and the praying people took over the space. Informant, addressed as “local resident” tell her views: *“I woke up at six. Outside there was a crowd of Muslims, and amplifiers repeated chants in Arabic. I thought I’m going crazy.”*(Maliyev 2010 in KP 10.9.2010) Also a representative of Muslim diaspora is interviewed. He confirms the existence of prayer room, and tells that it was too small for all the workers of the market who spread to the yard. *“But where should they go? It is a fundamental problem of Petersburg: We have almost a million Muslims, but the Great Mosque can fit only five to seven thousand people”* (Ibid.).

Newspapers reported on the resulting actions that were taken in relation to the proceeding Muslim prayers. According to Komsomol’skaia Pravda, as a result of previous overcrowding, the city administration decided to close the prayer room at Sennaya, and the believers were advised to go to Apraksin Market (described as a place with “no residential buildings) and the Great Mosque instead. Reporting from the Apraksin, the journalist writes how the prayers have organized themselves and the space around them in order to reconcile the worship with the actual market function of the place, where “the prayer proceeded under the voice of commercial announcements instead of the word of Mufti” and where the self-built oratory on a balcony “was packed with believers” (Krakovets and Mavliev 2010 in KP 17.11.2010). The presence of law enforcement officers is reported and legitimated as being necessary for securing order and carrying out anti-terrorist actions within the market place. Another report from the surroundings of the Mosque describes the OMON<sup>52</sup> fighters’ efforts to control the non-Russian-speaking crowds and the local’s struggles to get to work through the crowded metro station (Krakovets and Mavliev in KP 17.11.2010).

It occurs that religious life should not take place outside the places that are defined as belonging to the sphere of religion or, as in the case of migrants, defined as ethnic. The prayer room on Sennaya market did not disturb anyone until it was overcrowded, and the religious space expanded beyond the limits of the market. The depicted challenges for locals’ everyday life were

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<sup>52</sup> OMON, *Otryad Mobilny Osobogo Naznacheniya*, Special purpose mobile unit.



taken seriously, and the religious function was transferred to places that were either completely religious (the Mosque), or already dominated by the migrants (Apraksin). The description from Apraksin shows how religious and commercial use of space is organised in a packed but functioning way, whereas the number of non-Russians becomes a problem at the proximity of the Mosque. On the streets, migrants are accepted as workers, but expressions of religious life are a major distraction for the local way of life. Instead, in market places the religious function is “out of the way” in relation to local’s everyday life, the prayer is not disturbing the work of the people as if the separation of sacred place and place for commercial exchange and work would naturally belong together within the ethnic space.

Descriptions of migrants’ residential space are a common context where press represents assumed internal rules and conditions of ethnic space. Migrants, understood in a wide sense as “non-Russians” are excluded from the normative housing sphere of St. Petersburg<sup>53</sup>. Due to discriminating practises on private rental markets, low salaries and general shortage of housing, migrants’ residential situation is complicated. As Vedomosti describes, guest workers “*can live anywhere: at construction sites, vans, in so-called hostels, where dozens of people are sleeping on mattresses thrown on the floor. That is, wherever they can find a shelter.*” (Tochka nevosvrata... in Vedomosti 2.12.2010). Further, in the lack of access to the formal, controlled housing, the migrants “*go to cellars in basements, to the attics, organise quiet and massive settlements on the outskirts of Petersburg.*” (Yermakov 2010b in KP 25.2.2010)

As in the other cases about ethnic space (see the previous discussion about markets), migrant’s residential space is perceived from the majority’s point of view. Crowdedness, poor sanitary conditions, crime, spread of illness, noise and dirt (“*In the apartment next door lives twenty migrants! [...] They sleep in turns: ten people at night, ten people at daytime. They keep noise, fight...*”) are attributes that are used together with various metaphors (“*The police of St. Petersburg repeatedly stirred up guest workers’ nest*” (Yermakov 2011 in KP 28.3.2011)) to form a space that consists of illegal hostels and occupied buildings that should be demolished.

Specific addresses are mentioned in relation to police raids for revealing illegal hostels and shelters, whereas the negative qualities related to housing are usually generalised to unspecified buildings that are under renovation or waiting to be (e.g. Belenkova 2010b in Vedomosti 7.7.2010). While the addresses of successful police raids are being reported, these apartments constitute a seemingly homogenous space of housing, which is characterized by

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<sup>53</sup> “One-room apartment for rent. Cheap. Just renovated. New furniture, covered balcony. Only Russian families are considered’ – only few of the city’s poles and pillars are not decorated with ads of similar content”. (Nazarova 2010b in in Vedomosti 1.9.2010).

repetitive set of qualities in different locations, regularly being raided by police. Production of these isotopies is a syntagmatic process, in which elements are connected and then represented as places of sameness (Lefebvre 1996, 116).

Discussions about migrants' housing tend to be articulations toward certain administrative goals and aim to increase control over the housing sphere instead of emphatically engaging with the poor living conditions of migrants. For instance, the quote (in note no. 53) indicating the exclusion of migrants from the normal rental markets used to legitimate a government-funded programme for establishing a controlled form of corporate housing system (*Dokhodnye Doma*) as a solution for migrants' housing deficit<sup>54</sup>. Issues of concern are spread of infections in the city, crime, migrants' unwillingness to adapt, and economic costs of public utilities for registered residents of the buildings (e.g. Grigoryev 2011 in KP 16.2.2011; Nazarova 2010a in Vedomosti 6.8.2010; Sotnya prozrashinykh... 2010 in Vedomosti 8.10.2010; Mironov 2010 in Vedomosti 17.12.2010 ). The representations of housing are often either opinions of politicians, or those opinions repeated by journalists. These descriptions tend to form a rather established way of speaking. In other cases voice is given to representatives of "local population" who are mostly complaining about their neighbours' behaviour.

Inadequate registration, economic reasons, sanitary threats and general chaos are commonly used for legitimating control over migrants' housing. Also the problems related to grey economy are commonly articulated. The next quote constructs the hierarchy of problem in an interesting way: the absence of migrant from the address of official registration is not a problem, but where they actually reside is. Furthermore, inability to control the people exceeds the problems that the migrants might face while living outside municipal engineering:

"It seems that if the guest workers do not live in the addresses of registration, they do not disturb anyone either. Then we get to the question: where do they sleep? In houses under construction where they work? Without water, sewerage and heating? But the main problem is that it is impossible to control them. (Grigor'yev 2011 in KP 4.8.2011)

The need to control migrants' housing is taken very seriously. In order to tackle the grey economy surrounding the housing business, the newspapers include their audiences in the fight against illegal housing and corruption of local officials and the locals who are involved in the running of grey housing markets. In order to "fight illegal migration", the readers are encouraged to report "black flats" from their surroundings to a hotline specially put up for the announcements of illegal housing of migrant workers (Belenkova 2010b in Vedomosti 30.6.2010). The resulting

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<sup>54</sup> The discriminative practices at rental markets were not criticized, but instead represented as the predominant state of the market for which the dormitories were introduced as a solution.

cleaning of residential space always takes place in clearly indicated addresses, which marks some streets and buildings as belonging to this grey network. Furthermore, negative stereotypes of migrants' housing are elaborated in order to disvalue the morality of those involved in offering housing for migrants.

If the previous examples deal with administrative issues, an optional way to represent the migrants' living space is found in articles talking about organized crime. Unlike the stories about missing or false registration, this discourse of security understands migrants as forming ethnic enclaves, which are involved in various criminal actions. In this case the migrants are not represented as living in crowded and bad conditions, but instead the advantages of their "ethnic networks" and trans-national connections are represented as cultural or economic capital. The enclaves are described as systems with their internal logic and hierarchies, and which are relatively closed from outsiders:

"Settled on the banks of the Neva, most guests from the south live in heaps: settle close to each other, share common business. Many come here with whole affinity groups from one area or village. And here, in our place, rise small replicas of lives with their habits, quirks and prejudice. These small islands are like states within a state. They have everything that a state needs: the leaders, the masses of people, power struggles and, of course, crime. [...]. These mini-states are, as it turns out, quite brutal. The picture is very similar to our dashing 1990s with their racketeering, kidnapping, violence – things that we already honestly speaking forgot about already." (Rutman 2010b in Vedomosti 7.6.2010)

The "small islands of states within a state" are represented as projections of their "ethnic" homelands and their social networks and value systems. These spaces are characterized by hierarchical structures and very binding internal rules that are enforced by violent means. An analogue is done to the 90s, which was the time of chaos, crime and extortion. The article constructs a message, in which the projections of homelands serve as a window to Petersburg in the end of last century. The "guests from the South" are put to a dual position: on one hand they feel like at home and benefit from their networks, and on the other, their lives are used as a threatening scenario. Other articles tend to put more emphasis on migrants as victims of their own mafia-like organisations in order to articulate the danger of violence spreading outside the enclaves. These "states" are represented as if they occupied a certain physical space, referred to "hot Caucasian districts" like Central or Admiralty, even though it is understandable that the talk goes about social networks between people living in different parts of the city. There is no indication about variation between these "islands", even though they are composed of hierarchical systems.

Regardless of the context, the construction of ethnic space depends strongly on stereotypes and generalization that are used to veil the signification systems that exist and functions

within the marked spaces. The processes however include various methods: The case of Peoples' Market, the journalist exaggerates, employs stereotypes and makes synchronic generalizations about writings that become to mark the space as "ethnic". The representation of migrants' housing is also based on stereotypes. In this case they are only multiplied in order to create a whole network of places that share the qualities of grey economy, and crowded and unsanitary conditions as synchronic paradigms. The case of Apraksin shows how a latent, previously unreported and unconstructed place for prayer is assimilated to places that are already constructed as ethnic. According to the "local" understanding, the specific syntagm of Sennaya square did not include the possibility of ethnic worship. It was considered as misplaced paradigm that belongs to the syntagm that is textually attached to location of Apraksin and the Great Mosque. The streets are construed as dual places, where locals commute, relax and enjoy the culture as migrants are depicted as either working or waiting to be employed.

Even though the processes that create representations of ethnic space are diverse, the resulting spaces include some very similar characters. The need to control these places is extremely important. Law enforcement officials are present everywhere, and it seems like they have all the right to enter the ethnic space. They also seem to have power on defining where the public spaces are located. In addition to ethnic homogenization of the migrants' space, there is no division between public and private. Also, the functional aspect of space is compressed: work, leisure and worship happen simultaneously in the same, crowded places.

#### **4.2.3. Ideal organisation of space – avoidance of encounter and legitimization of stereotypes**

*"Affordable for the city - guest workers under surveillance"* (Mavliyev 2011c in KP 4.6.2011)

As was previously discussed, the press produces representations of spaces that are internally homogenous and separate from local idea of public or common space. This existence of migrants' places has an impact on normative use and organisation of urban space. Organisation of space is linked to what kind of role is given to perceived and represented places of migrants and the symbol structures they represent within the majority view on Petersburg and the normative use and symbolism of the city. The majority view is on one hand backed with imperial imagination of dominance of Petersburgers (both social and cultural) and Petersburg as a multicultural Imperial capital, and on the other with negative stereotypes about migrants.

I found the expressions of private and public space to be important in terms of expressing ideal organisation of urban space in relation to migrants. While locals' were granted

access to the whole city and the migrants' space was articulated as challenging to the local's right to live their everyday life, migrant's right to the city became expressed only in terms of working. Any expression of migrant as a representative of a culture, not merely as a guest worker was interpreted as a potential threat. These definitions and borders of private and public are represented as legitimate by employing stereotypes of migrants. Further, historical scaling and narratives of St. Petersburg itself are used as arguments to structure the urban space and set the norms of its use.

Private and public space and historical continuity are aspects that structure the expressions of ideal spatial organisation of Petersburg. As was discussed, migrants gain access to the streets as workers, whereas native Petersburgers are represented as users of the public space. However, despite locals' reluctance to work on the streets themselves, working does not grant the migrants with access to the whole city as wanted actors, and even the working migrants seem to have a very restricted opportunity to use space. In the next quote a private employer represents the "Petersburgers" opinion, according to which the 'stealing' and 'drinking' migrants should keep off the courtyards. The article reveals a symbolic border that are drawn between the streets as public space and courtyards as places associated with proximity of private sphere.

"If we employed migrants, we could get by with far lower labour cost. But, as it turned out, Petersburgers do not want the newcomers to clean their courtyards. They ask us not to hire them. Stereotype has already developed: migrants drink and steal."  
(Morozova et al. 2010 in KP 14.1.2010)

These stereotypes about migrants are regularly described in the press, whereas other forms of migrants' social life are missing. By attributing common negative qualities to migrants the citation represents not only exclusion of migrants, but also exclusion of drinking and stealing. The attributes imposed on migrants are recognized as stereotypes, but they are nevertheless employed as a valid excuse for not employing them. Further, the all the people addressed as *Petersburgers* are suggested to share the stereotypic image of migrants, who should, even when working, be invisible, and stay away from local residential, private space.

Overlapping of local residential space and non-local place of worship is also articulated in relation to the Muslim prayers that was about to take place for the second time near the Sennaya Market in St. Petersburg:

"This time, in order to protect the sleep of Petersburgers, militsiya got up earlier in the morning - The prayer room at the market is closed, stated a guard at the entrance. -No prayers will take place here today. Muslims are advised to go to Apraksin market where there are no residential buildings, or take the subway to the Great Mosque".  
(Krakovets and Mavliev 2010 in KP 17.10.2010)

By reporting the words of the guard the journalist represents also a version about how the space has to be organized, and how this organization is enforced. The Apraksin market, being a place physically separated from where the locals live, is pointed as a place where praying is accepted, whereas the Great Mosque is by definition a location for worship.

It becomes clear, that overlapping of religious (Muslim) and residential (“local”) space is not accepted, and the self-organised prayer room is denied from the Muslims as its functions may affect the surrounding public space. The Muslims can’t decide the places to which they attach meanings in case the meanings are realized in practice, suggesting alternative use of space. Representations of Sennaya market and its surroundings do not communicate possibility for including the religious practise to the normative use of urban space, and instead the disturbances of local’s private life were elaborated. Prayer room was accepted as long as it remained within the market place and thus invisible, but crossing the border to the public yard lead to the closure of the prayer room altogether. Furthermore, the religious practise was physically transferred to locations (Apraksin market and the Great Mosque) that fit in the conventional spatial signification system of the locals, and where it does not overlap with the daily routes of the assumed “locals”. Possible significance of the prayer room for the prayers at Sennaya market is ignored. Moreover, prejudice toward Muslim prayer was expressed in the articles’ reports of police officers who were carrying out “routine acts of anti-terrorism” and reporting on locals’ whose fear of attacking Wahhabis were used as legitimate evidence of public praying being a major distraction (see Maliyev 2010 in KP 10.9.2010).

In addition to expressing places marked marginal because of its ethnic characters or mere presence of migrants, newspapers also talk about ideal ways to organise migrants’ private space. In the next dialogue the journalist interviews a high official about issues related to migration. The journalist is slightly provocative and repeats common stereotypes through the article. However, the discussion produces one version about reality.

“Problems of discontent with for foreigners are constantly been brought up. People are registered legally, rent apartments by contracts and still others are demanding: get away from here! [journalist:] *Of course, they’re loud and bring in dirt...* - Unfortunately that also happens. But also when they are so still that you could hear a pin drop, people around are not satisfied. And if no laws are being broken, what could be done? Perhaps, these people should be compactly settled somewhere. Chinese who built the Stockmann lived on Mokhovaya Street. They had ideal order with all the necessary documents, half-military system of living: Four-store beds, white t-shirts and black trousers on everyone, walked in order, sang songs. Of course, people from Central Asia live in another way... Now the city has launched a programme of

building *Dokhodnye Doma*. But understandably, they are not enough.” (Rutman 2010c in Vedomosti 10.12.2010)

This example talks about people’s attitudes that are indifferent for the legal status or behaviour of a migrant. The official talks about discrimination that migrants face in their everyday lives. The stereotypes are very primitive: noise and dirt. Even after the stereotypes have been revealed as discriminating ones, they are represented as legitimate base for control and exclusion of migrants from the private residential space. A scenario of an ideal way to organize the migrants, also well-behaved and legal ones, is described in detail, contrasting the negative stereotypes. “Paramilitary system of life” is a very powerful expression, which puts migrants to a new syntagmatic dimension that relates migrants to soldiers. Synchronically connected concepts thus share qualities: they are an organized, homogenous group obeying orders without individual demands. However, it is noticed that the example is only an exception that does not apply to people from Central Asia, who again belong to the original syntagmatic dimension with stereotypical qualities. The ending notion about government project is intended to show, that the paramilitary system of housing migrants in dormitories is nonetheless desired.

Descriptions of the workers’ dormitories in several articles furthermore confirm the fact that in relation to migrants, control of space and people is desired. The descriptions of the mentioned *dokhodnye doma* tell about the internal order and rules of the places. Newspapers were rather active in writing about the places, and often emphasized the strict control that would be exercised on the guest workers living in these dormitories<sup>55</sup>: “*Sex is prohibited there. These guests did not come here to build love, but build the city, to look after it. Drink alcohol – you’ll be fined. There are video cameras in the hallways, barbed wire around the premises.*”(Maliyev 2011c in KP 4.6.2011). “*Inside the rules are very strict: you can enter only with a permit and on certain time of the day...*” (Grigor’yev 2011 in KP 4.8.2011). Moreover, the movement of guest workers from the tenement houses to the workplace is organised: “*In the morning a bus drives them to work, and in the evening brings them back.*” (Fadeyeva 2011 in Vedomosti 13.9.2011). This means that even the commute through the city is organised from outside.

The organisation and appropriation of space seems to rely on the local population’s right to their public and private life in all parts of the city, whereas migrants’ right to the city is conditional to their usefulness for the city (migrants keeping the city clean), while private commute through the city, leisure and expressions of religion become sanctioned by police officers, moral voice of the journalist and informants (descriptions about routine act of checking the IDs of people

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<sup>55</sup> See also Suris 2010b in KP 20.10.2010.

with non-Slavic appearance Krakovtsev 2010b in KP 8.9.2010; Kessenikh 2010a in Vedomosti 5.2.2010; Rutman 2010c in Vedomosti 10.12.2010; Rutman 2011 in Vedomosti 25.3.2011). Public space is not the place for migrants' holidays or leisure, for they should take place within the borders of markets or Mosques. Moreover, there seems to be no representations of things such as migrants' private space – privacy is univocally replaced with control.

Also historical narratives of St. Petersburg are employed in representations of ideal organisation of space. Previously the streets were constructed as places that are associated with migrants, and the status of “native Petersburgers” was depicted to be that of user's, not caretakers of the city. The separation of the space was done in relation to a social status or cultural level that grant the right to consider oneself as local. The next quote continues the theme of associating migrants with the streets, but also elaborates how the historical practice entitles the locals to desire well-organized ethnic workforce to the city.

“Moreover, it is completely traditional for us to use diaspora groups for cleaning the city. At the Tsarist times, Tatars usually worked as caretakers in Petersburg. They lived in artilleries of ten-thirty people. Supervisors were taking care of the discipline, did not allow drinking or truancy - and the city stayed clean and in order. Perhaps, it would be about the time to return to the successful examples of the past?” (Prishchep 2010 in KP 22.1.2010)

This historical example is used for naturalizing the use of migrant workers as a tradition: not only was the Imperial Petersburg clean, but also the migrants were orderly managed and kept in their artilleries unless they behaved. The representation is hardly a realistic one, and gives more information about the present than the past. Tatars, here equalled to migrants, are represented as people who can work effectively for the city, but only under tight control. Traditions in turn legitimize the use and control of workers by representing Petersburg as a place that restores historical norms for today. Furthermore, the historical scaling also “traditionalises” and legitimizes the stereotypes as historical fact and legitimate base for action. Control as a historical element is elevated above freedom.

These examples give an idea about how the lived space of Petersburg is organized in relation to migrants. Encounters between different groups are represented as disturbances and conflicting situations. Management of diversity is understood as control over migrants. Instead of attempts to create common space and room for interaction, the strategy employed has an isolative function. The migrants are articulated behind imagined or real borders that restrict their presence in public and private places. Furthermore, migrants are not allowed to have freedom or privacy even behind these constructed borders: extensive control over migrants should be practiced even to the excluded. Historical scaling is used in order to legitimize certain actions and attitudes as being



traditional for Petersburg. Interestingly, Petersburg is constructed as a container for moral and ethical norms that are fundamentally present in the city in a way that is immune to time. Also, the analysis reveals that newspaper representations recognize their use of stereotypes, but instead of deconstructing them, they use them as legitimate principles for exclusion.<sup>56</sup>

In the sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3 the articles were criticising migrants for their actions and qualities, which represented as a threatening the locals' everyday life. Table 6 summarises the representations of the city and its residents in this context<sup>57</sup>. News told about how migrants were breaking laws and social norms and claiming space for themselves within the city. Local's right to the city was contested because the competing, ethnic or migrants' way of life marked urban space differently, or because migrants' space was occupying Petersburg. Representations of ideal city were very clearly expressed: locals should decide the migrants' place have complete control over it.

| <b>City as a perceived space contested - Critique for the migrants</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Role of migrants   | Breaking the social norms and laws              |
| Role of locals   | Non-labouring free users of space               |
| The city's relation to its residents                                   | Dual: migrants' claims vs. locals' claims       |
| Ideal space  | Dual: locals as landlords, migrants as servants |

**Table 6: City as a perceived space, representation of confronted city**

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<sup>56</sup> It might be worthwhile to ask whether these processes of creating representations of migrants' space are particular for Petersburg. For instance, Mulkomel' (2005) writes, that exaggeration of number of migrants is very common in the Russian press. Therefore it can be assumed that similar processes might take place on national scale, too. However, where the ethnic spaces are constructed depends a lot on the local conditions, and the meanings that are attached to particular places. Also, as was indicated, even though the descriptions of migrants are stereotypic and may not differ from the national discourse, the narratives of locality and resulting scaling of the city are unique for St. Petersburg. The historical and cultural scaling is further discussed in relation to articles that discuss St. Petersburg as a symbolic region as an entity in the regional system (Paasi 2001a, 16), where the intra-urban organisation and appropriation of space is replaced with scaling of multi-cultural St. Petersburg and its migrant-related issues in relation to other units in the regional system.

<sup>57</sup> See appendix 1 for comparing the tables 2, 4, 5 and 6.

### **4.3. Mediated St. Petersburg: city of myths, multiple margins and apartheid**

#### **4.3.1 Construction of marginality**

As was discussed earlier, identity always comes with borders that separate and recognise differences between ‘us’ and ‘them’. Margins are conceptualised as spatial metaphor for borders (Kharlamov 2012) in the context of spatial identities.

The narratives that constructed the identity of St. Petersburg as a tolerant one were not based on opposing “Petersburgers” with “others”, but instead emphasised the significance of diversity for the creation the very particularity of St. Petersburg. The city was not understood within the interpretative frame of a single dominating culture in the centre and surrounding periphery, marginality around it. Rather, the notion of locality was constructed as consisting of multiple cultures, the borders of which were not exclusive. Respectively, multicultural identity produced a multicultural form of marginality, where margins were found at the intersections of cultures, and people inhabiting the margins were competent in more than one culture. The notion of historical, multicultural city of St. Petersburg understands the city as being born within this polycultural notion of marginality, and thus the physical face of the city is also interpreted as an inherently tolerant one. The idea of multicultural Petersburg, consisting of “the matrix of European culture and Russian soul”, is articulated as a tolerant and multicultural core, cultural centre of the city.

Even though the narratives about multicultural Petersburg managed to represent the city as a tolerant place, the newspapers are full of accounts of places filled with people who are not local or assimilated. These urban margins are spatial metaphors of places beyond the borders of unicultural local identity. When writing on the level of perceived space, the newspapers no longer recognise cultural diversity, but instead give accounts of uncivilized, dangerous migrants with “their foreign cultures”. On the level of writing about everyday lives, the constructed multicultural identities of St. Petersburg has turned into a centre of a unicultural notion of marginality where the threatening characters attributed to the places inhabited by migrants legitimise the exclusive character of the border between margins and the centre.

Within this notion of Petersburg as applying a double set of identities and margins, the city is constructed as a cultural unit; Locality is defined as an ability to communicate through shared cultural categories that are specific for the city and participation in the discourse about the great history and culture of St. Petersburg. In principle, the mediated city identities are tolerant and inclusive, but they seem offer only one possible version of local identity for the newcomers, and

marginalisation is the only option for assimilation to the single cultural core that pretends to be tolerant.

#### 4.3.2. Construction of myths

“The difference between situated and generalised knowledge is the difference between meanings and myths. Myth transforms meaning into form, history into nature” (Burgess 1985, 199).

In the articles the newspapers tended to articulate the physical infrastructure toward two readings, ‘Tolerant Petersburg’ which employs the stereotypic images and existing narratives of the city, and ‘Migrants’ Petersburg’, which in turn bases itself into stereotypes of migrants. I interpreted these two readings being produced as myths (see Barthes 2006, 99), employing elements from different narratives and stereotypes and turning them into other intentional messages. Myths is a second-order semiological structure, in which a “sign [...] in the first system becomes a mere signifier of the second” (Barthes 1989, 114). Due to the reduction of signs into signifiers, the constructed mythical places are empty of reality, alien, outside normal and common spaces (Burgess, 1985, 206).

Physical environment of the city, the constructed identities of St. Petersburg, and established discourse of migrant workers are domains (signs) that contribute to the construction of myths of Tolerant Petersburg and Migrants’ Petersburg. All of these domains have been studied and documented separately, and are signifying for the newspaper audience in themselves.

Identity narratives of St. Petersburg and related accounts on physical cityscape construct the myth of Tolerant Petersburg<sup>58</sup>. Even though the identities employed formally vary and allow a number of understanding of locality and who is local (the tables 2 and 3), as material of myths they are impoverished from meaning and converted to form of the myth that is defined by its intentionality. The identities are used to communicate the same message: St. Petersburg is a tolerant city, and the migrants are already included within the idea of locality. Within this myth otherness is reduced to sameness, and the past gives legitimation to the present.

Understanding of the place is fixed in the context of the myth: the city should not change, because it has assimilated everyone before; the physical infrastructure containing symbols of tolerance from the imperial times is still in place; and the very essence of St. Petersburg is related to respected people, newcomers, who have become symbols of the city (e.g. Akhmatova, Peter I).

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<sup>58</sup> One might argue that this is already a second-order myth, third-order semiotic structure as many elements from which is drawn can be said to belong to the Petersburg Myth (3.3).

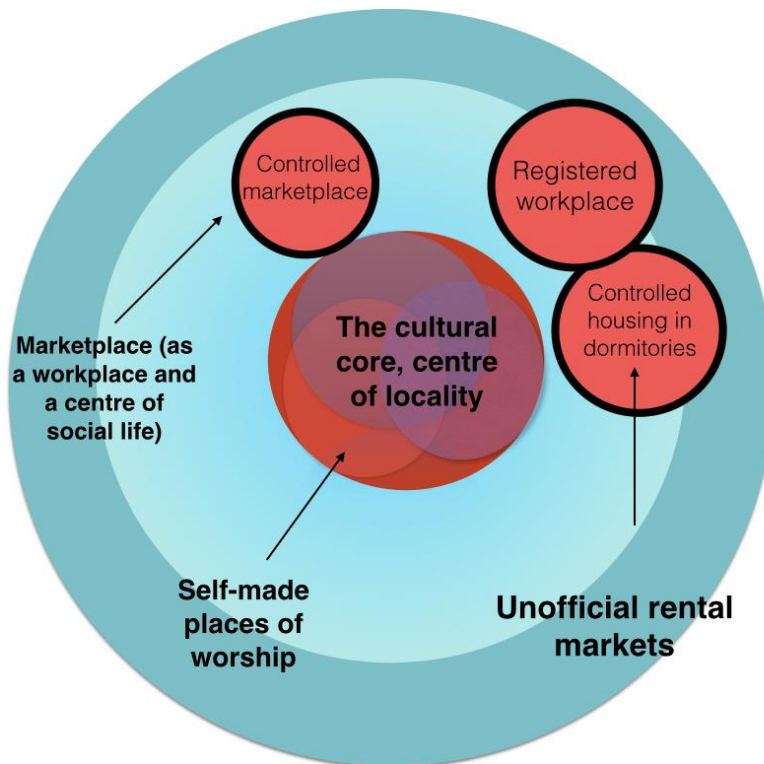
The myth of Migrants' Petersburg consists of stereotypes about migrants and their culture, how they live and work, and the known city infrastructure into which they are written in according to the conventions of stereotypic media language. Also stories about the migrants' places that were formerly inhabited by locals are included to add a sense of familiarity to the scenes. The resulted representations of place, myth of Migrants' Petersburg is an anti-place, outside local norms, and populated by people who do not belong to the society. Through this myth the migrants' places as well as the migrants themselves are represented as a threat to "civilised society" in order to consolidate the desired control over them.

The two myths do not interact in the press. They exist simultaneously, take material from the same locations, but never meet each other. Myths "look back to the things that are already known" (Hellberg Hirn 2003, 282) and create the mythical places as stages for actors whose action are reduced to ritual performances of their stereotypic qualities that serve to communicate the myth.

#### **4.3.3 Ideal landscape and organisation of diversity**

Newspapers represented many accounts about ideal organisation of space in relation to labour migrants. The figure 2 illustrates how the public space is organised in the spatial imaginary of St. Petersburg. The outmost, dark blue circle represents the margins that are constructed within the unicultural notion of the city, space where the guest workers live and work in places outside the normal society. The light blue colour stands for the shared public space in the city, where interaction between locals and migrants is possible, but where migrants are accepted only within the social frames of working. The cultural core stands for what was formerly constructed as idea of multicultural Petersburg, which seemingly consists of multiple cultures and includes symbols of tolerance (e.g. the Great Mosque, churches of different confessions).

The ideal spatial order in the newspapers does not represent the city as home for all its residents or suggest more inclusive identity of locality, but instead seeks for even tighter division of urban space, and establishment of extensive control over the places reserved for migrants. Instead of integrating the migrants within the official private or public housing systems, the workers are put into dormitories managed by their employers (Controlled housing in dormitories). As was indicated in numerous examples, these dormitories do not rely on good behaviour of their residents; in the place of social norms these places have paramilitary order and surveillance. Ideally, the commute between dormitory and workplace is organised by employer, and the workers do not need to move through public space independently.



**Figure 2: Ideal organisation of space: Enclosure of migrants**

Lefebvre (2000, referred to in Charnok and Ribera-Fumaz 2011, 617) writes that representations of space tend to reduce difference in urban contexts and homogenise space. Representations reduce spontaneous differences to “differences internally acceptable to a set of ‘systems’ which are planned as such, prefabricated as such” (Lefebvre 1991, 396). The newspapers’ way to mediate images of Muslim worship that was forced from the public space to the official places of worship and to the marketplace was indeed an example of homogenisation of space and its functions. In the representation of the events the city was predefined into a certain system of conventional difference (mosque=worship; Square=commuting and trade; Apraksin=ethnic). The semiotic structure of the city includes certain places for religion, and the press reproduces the symbolic order as the only possible one in its city imaginary – symbolic diversity that presence other cultures might bring is not accepted.

The margins and myths, even though seemingly coinciding (Migrant’s Petersburg with unicultural margins, Tolerant Petersburg and multicultural notion of marginality), their logics are different. Margins are understood as places beyond borders of claimed identity, places that are used for defining the “self” in a process where meanings interact, and are thus able to be located, changed and controlled. The material for myth has a different character. Myth does not seek to define the material it uses according to any logic but its own signifying purposes, and is not formulated as anti-thesis of other myths. However, I interpret the role of the two myths in creation

of the spatial order and legitimisation of it as a remarkable one. Myth of Migrants' Petersburg alienates the migrants from the social space of the city and distorts the view of their social life and ways to relate and give meanings to their places. In turn, the myth of Tolerant Petersburg offers only ready-made symbolic order for the city, which leaves no room for diversity in meanings or local identities in any expressive forms. The myths and their dominance in the representations are pervasive for the imagination and thus influence the formation of identities. The tendency to locate migrant-talk into mythical instead of more contextual frameworks consolidates the social order, where labour migrants are socially and spatially marginalised, almost isolated, servants of the city.

#### **4.3.4 Is there anything but myths? Relations between city and locals – migrants as symbols of a sinking ship**

When talking about labour migrants, the papers rarely represented scenes where place would be constructed contextually, without populating them with images or archetypes of locals and migrants who do not appear as individual actors, but representatives of their categories with respective manners and reactions to the news. In this sense not only the migrants but also the locals were racialised in cultural terms. The only context for representing the space or any of the actors as meaningful and situated was that of articulation of internal contradiction between the different local actors about the preferred use of city space. Representations of decaying infrastructure and irrational maintenance of the city, resulting from greediness of private companies, and decreasing symbolic status of Petersburg due to tasteless city planning, were contexts where the actors were not types of certain categories, but had to be attributed with (negative) characters through a metaphor: Bad architects and ineffective, corrupt administration were compared to guest workers in their inability to produce a liveable and lovable city for its residents.

Common city for migrants and locals was found only in one article (Gribov, A. 2011 in KP 16.2.2011). Accounts on a debutant's observations of everyday life in St. Petersburg arouse a counter-argument where a marketplace, defined by the politician as a site of decreased cultural levels, was turned back to a place for buying and selling, misspelling migrants turned into vendors, locals from teachers to customers, passengers and co-citizens. A snobbish and extremely intolerant politician was able to call into question the most diverse and tolerant account of St. Petersburg.

## 5. Conclusions

This dissertation looked at media representations of St. Petersburg in the light of recent influx of migrant workers, and was motivated on the one hand by interest to understand how local media's representations of place localise or challenge the perceived interethnic problems that on a national scale draw from the catalogue of nationalism, and on the other, by acquiring knowledge about localisation and spatial realisation of racial discourse, spatialisation of otherness in landscapes produced in media.

The purpose was to study the spatial imaginary of St. Petersburg and the significance of local identity for the image newspapers create about St. Petersburg as a city inhabited by locals and migrants alike. This included studying the appropriation of space for different social groups – migrants and locals, and the processes that are used to connect local identity with the resulted appropriation of space. This was done by studying how are the existing narratives of local identity on one hand, and discourse on migrants on the other, employed in constructing St. Petersburg as a tolerant and inclusive, or exclusive and marginalizing city. Finally, I intended to explain the persistence of observed contradictions between articulated tolerant identity and the very intolerant appropriation of space. In other words, how is the image of the city and the relations between the city and its residents described and legitimised?

The case study revealed that simultaneous employment of racialized discourse on migrants and narratives about St. Petersburg as a tolerant city result in exclusive rather than potentially tolerant and inclusive image of locality. Employment of narratives that construct the local identity as a tolerant one does not diminish the borders between migrants' and locals' space when the urban space is appropriated for different actors. The racial discourse on migrants is spatialised in the city by attaching stereotypic images of migrants into the places they inhabit. Not only were the migrants constructed as ethnic others, but also their spaces, located in the same city, districts and houses with locals, are constructed as separate, disordered, outlaw and dangerous; the places into which migrants are written into are filled with characteristics and attributes the locals would like to exclude from the public space they inhabit. No attributes denoting coziness, comfort, homing or positive aspects of normal human life are employed when migrants' spaces are constructed. In public space, fully accessible for locals, migrants are accepted only within the social context of working.

Further, the racial discourse on migrants and its spatialisation did not prevent the construction of St. Petersburg as a city with tolerant identity. The core of this tolerance was constructed in representations of Imperial St. Petersburg and Leningrad, where the very essence of

the city was explained having born out of encounters of different, coexisting cultures. Margins of this identity were found at the crossroads of different cultures, thus making hybridity a specific character, dominating value for the city identity.

However, instead of representing this essence as inclusive version of locality, it became a single core for the unicultural notion of St. Petersburg that was used to represent migrants as cultural outcast. The multicultural idea of St. Petersburg thus consolidated its moral position as it claimed to be tolerant, while it prevented the realization of this tolerance by arguing that migrants, being culturally incompetent, formed a threat for the very idea of tolerant St. Petersburg. Instead of paving way to a more inclusive idea of locality, the employment of narratives of multicultural Petersburg can offer only one possible version of accepted local identity for its residents, and thus enforces marginalisation of migrants as an option for complete assimilation

How, then, it is possible that these contradicting images can exist simultaneously in a way that they in no way challenge, but instead reinforce each other? Analysis of the produced images of St. Petersburg revealed, that the constructed images of St. Petersburg both as multicultural and unicultural one did not actually signify or represent the migrants (as workers, representative of ethnic groups or criminals), identities of St. Petersburg or its locals in the migrant-related contexts to describe or talk about them, but to use them as material for representing the desired or conventional forms of locality. When talking about migrants, the press did not actually construct St. Petersburg as a place, but as two separate myths, namely Tolerant Petersburg and Migrants' Petersburg. Myth "denies any reality to the places and people being written about" (Burgess 1985, 223) but while consisting of material that already has signifying consciousness (identities of St. Petersburg, images of migrants, the symbolically saturated physical city), "one can reason about [the myth] while discounting [its] substance" (Barthes 1989, 110).

The myth of Tolerant Petersburg has variation in what it contains, but it always aims at forming the same picture of locality: it positions the city between Europe and Russia, emphasizes the role of encounters of different cultural and ethnic groups in the birth of the city, and distinguishes the cultural core as the very idea of St. Petersburg. The myth of migrants' Petersburg, in turn, elaborates the lack of normative social control present where migrants live, omnipresent threat of terrorism, illegal economy, and lack of cultural and private life in order to legitimate the need to establish and exercise extensive control over labour migrants.

What was left outside of the myths are the accounts talking about everyday life in the city, which are called into question in contexts of representing contradictions between the local's and authorities' – city administrations' idea of the city. Argumentations construct the city as a meaningful one for the locals, while the ignorance and incompetent cultural understanding or moral



degradation of those planning the city for the future is expressed by comparing them with "gastarbaitery". Representation of the threat that migrants posed to the city was constructed into a myth and thus eternalised and emptied from significance, while the actions, ineffectiveness and decisions of corrupt administration seemed to cause a real change for altering the city to something the journalist does not identify with.

The final conclusion of the study is to confirm that the construction of St. Petersburg identity in newspaper articles is not only constrained by the conventional ways of writing the city according to the codes of St. Petersburg Text, but is also trapped by its inability to talk about labour migrants outside the racialised discourse. If spatial identity and margins are different sides of the same coin, a stereotypic identity cannot but produce stereotypic margins. Perhaps, Petersburg cannot afford losing its others in the fear of losing itself.

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## Appendix 1.

|                                      | City as a perceived space contested                                 |   | City as a symbolic place contested                                   |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
|                                      | Critique for power (users' vs. planners' city)                      | Critique for the migrants (confronted city)     | Defensive representation (capital of extremism as imposed ethnicity) | Representation of conserved city  |
| Role of migrants                     | Work: they signify the cause of the problems as executors of change | Breaking the social norms and laws              | Symbolic: a socio-cultural category symbolizes cultural incompetence | Objects of adaptation and assimilation (as a social category are a threat to symbolic status of the city) |
| Role of locals                       | Non-labouring free users of space                                   |   | Responsible for maintain the symbolic order                          |   |
| The city's relation to its residents | Practical: the urban space is claimed for everyday life             | Dual: migrants' claims vs. locals' claims       | Deterministic: city creates its citizens, socializes them            | Symbiotic: people claimed for preserving the city   |
| Ideal space                          | Well-functioning city space   | Dual: locals as landlords, migrants as servants | Historically defined Russian city                                    | Cultural Capital  |

**Table 7. The table shows how the different actors and their relation to the city depend on the context of the article.**